RAMBLES ALONG THE STYX

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RAMBLES ALONG THE STYX.

BY

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. LEACH, C.B.

Late of the Rifle Brigade.

47857

AUTHOR OF

"ROUGH SKETCHES OF THE LIFE OF AN OLD SOLDIER;"

"RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS RELATIVE TO THE DUTIES OF TROOPS COMPOSING THE ADVANCED CORPS OF AN ARMY;"

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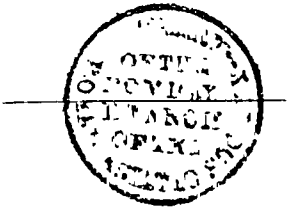

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LONDON:
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DEDICATION.

TO THE

SURVIVORS OF THE PENINSULAR ARMY

I Dedicate this little Book.

LONG MAY THEY KEEP OUT OF OLD CHARON'S CLUTCHES; AND WHEN THE DAY FOR EMBARKATION IN HIS FERRY-BOAT ARRIVES, MAY THEY BE REUNITED ON THE OPPOSITE BANK OF THE STYX TO THEIR OLD COMPANIONS IN ARMS, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF WHOM WERE HURRIED PREMATURELY ACROSS THAT RIVER BY THE MUSKETRY, GRAPE-SHOT, AND SABRES OF THE BRAVEST AND MOST FORMIDABLE ENEMY THE BRITISH ARMY EVER ENCOUNTERED, BUT OVER WHOM IT WAS INVARIABLY VICTORIOUS.

J. LEACH.

PREFACE.

As most books have a Preface, mine must have one also; but it shall be short, and I hope to the purpose.

The following "*Rambles*" were published at different periods in the "Naval and Military Gazette." They are colloquies between old soldiers who are supposed to have met in the Stygian shades, and discussed various subjects with which they were conversant before their departure from *this* bank of the Styx.

Some of the stories are *perfectly true;* and this the Author can vouch for, he having taken a particularly active part in promoting the curious pastimes therein related.

In those which are entirely free from fiction a remark to that effect is made at the com mencement of the chapter.

Several of the characters introduced will probably be recognised by some of the old Peninsular Soldiers, and especially by the remnant of the Light Division of that Army, if, indeed, this little book happens to meet their eye.

Amongst the more grave and matter-of-fact discussions, the Author flatters himself, will be found some plain and wholesome *truths*, which, however, he is neither vain nor silly enough to believe will be listened to, or acted upon, by the "powers that be," but which are, nevertheless, incontrovertible.

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RAMBLES ALONG THE STYX.

&c &c.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINS A GREAT DEAL OF TRUTH AND SOME FICTION.

"HERE comes Charon again, with a lot of passengers, and amongst them, if I am not much mistaken, my quondam friend, Ned Havresack," exclaimed an old stager, who, long located on that bank of the stream from whence ther is no return, was constantly on the look-out for new arrivals. "Delighted to see you, my old comrade; you've had tolerably long innings, and it's high time you should take up your quarters here. We parted company somewhat unceremoniously at Waterloo, as you no doubt remember; I being suddenly popped off by an ounce of French lead in the thorax, and forthwith consigned to the care of the old ferryman. I was always pretty

much of a walking Army List, a general chronicler, and, the same propensities still sticking to me, not one of the myriads of shades which you see gliding about can tell you more than I can of the history of most of them previously to their passage being effected hither. Let us saunter along the banks, and look about us; ask me, without reserve, any questions, and I shall be happy to give you all the information I possess. You will have no difficulty in recognising your former friends and acquaintances; for, with the exception of their being thiner and paler, and their figures more attenuated than they were before old Charon took them in tow, they are but little changed in appearance. For example; don't you remember an acquaintance of ours who received a sabre-cut in the face at Sahagun, and was sent post-haste across this river several years afterwards by a pistol-shot in the affair near Morales? Well, there he is with the scar on his face; surely you cannot fail to recognise him? The Hussar brigade acquitted itself bravely, Ned, on that occasion, and not less so at Sahagun."

"True, Harry, true; but, Lord bless you, all the gallant deeds of those days are utterly forgotten; and that you would have found out, had you been permitted to sojourn on the other side the Styx as long as I was. Any one who now ventures to broach such subjects is voted a bore and a prosy, superannuated old fellow. Every dog

has his day; and Waterloo, which—thanks to John Bull's love of novelty—consigned to oblivion the glorious exploits in Egypt, Maida, Java, the Peninsula, and various other places, has been itself thrown into the shade by the recent affair in China. Chinese junks and mandarins have also in their turn been lost sight of, in consequence of the gallant and chivalrous Charley Napier's victories in the East. If an island in the Carribean Ocean happens next to be the scene of action, and is wrested from the enemy with the loss of a dozen men slightly wounded and two killed, the well-fought fields of Scinde will be forgotten, and the conquest of the sugar island stand at the top of the tree; and thus the thing goes on." "*Apropos* of China," observed Harry; "do you see that rum-looking figure looking intently into the river? That, you must know, is the celebrated Chinese General, Twing-twang-nim-fow-chim-chow-cherry-chow, who, in consequence of his having been unable to make head against the barbarians, was most wisely and humanely sentenced by his Celestial Majesty to be *sawed in two*. He has, you perceive, rather a queer mode of moving—a kick, as it were, in his gallop—which, considering the rough handling he received from the Chinese sawyers, is not much to be wondered at."*

* One of the Chinese generals was ordered by the Emperor to be *sawed in two*.

"Just look there, Ned; and as a proof how obstinately our former propensities adhere to us, observe that figure going through the motions of throwing a fly scientifically into that part of the river where, if trout there be in it, he would, most assuredly, get a rise, if he had the proper apparatus."

"Why, Harry, I protest I recognise the old piscator; and a better, braver, or a more kind-hearted fellow never put on a soldier's uniform. With what patience and perseverance he whipped and flogged every river between Lisbon and Toulouse, when a halt afforded him opportunities for doing so! How jovial and good-natured a companion he was, and with what glee and spirit he was ever ready to figure away with the Signoras in the waltz, bolero, and fandango! A grape-shot at Toulouse struck poor Charley off the list; and having no relations to claim his effects, his baggage which (like that of most of the peninsulars in those days) consisted of three shirts, three pair of stockings, two pair of inexpressibles, one black leather stock, one regimental coat, one cloak, one grey great-coat, or surtout, one half-worn-out blanket, two pair of boots, one razor, one comb, one shaving-box, two tooth-brushes, a piece of yellow-soap, two hand-towels; and a havresack, containing a couple of onions, some salt in a bit of paper, a few exceedingly strong cigars, two mouldy ship-biscuits, one pound of salted ship-pork (boiled), a pocket-

knife, pewter-spoon and fork, a half-pint tin cup (vulgarly called a black-jack), and a calibash, with a small quantity of the worst description of Brazilian rum in it, also the miserable half-starved donkey which carried this valuable wardrobe, became the property of the British Government; and, being sold, the proceeds were made over to the Treasury."

"And a most opportune windfall it was; for, what with subsidies to Austria, Russia, Prussia, Sicily, Portugal, and Spain, not one fraction of which ever was or ever will be repaid in money, or even in thanks, 'tis hard to say how they could have got on at Whitehall without it."

"What group is that, Harry, on our right hand?"

Oh! that's a batch of country squires. What are the odds they are not discussing the merits of some horse, fox-hound, rabbit-beagle, spaniel or pointer; inveighing bitterly against poachers, or holding a dissertation on parish roads, poor rates and justice-meetings?"

"Never mind, proceed, proceed; and when we reach the next bend of the river, we shall, I strongly suspect, stumble on a set of a very different description."

"Yes, there they are, sure enough; Nelsonians and Wellingtonians in abundance; and amongst

them a goodly lot, also, of men who fought under Howe, Duncan, Jervis, Abercrombie, Moore, Auchmuty, and many many other great and gallant naval and military chiefs; in short, a United Service Club to all intents and purposes."

"'Twill amuse you, Ned, to hear their discussions; and we cannot do better than join their party for awhile."

"Yours, my old messmate, was decidedly a hard case—a very hard one; but I consider my own a still harder one," said a veteran tar. "*You* fought under Howe on the 1st of June, and at the Nile and Copenhagen with Nelson, and died a *Commander*. I, on the other hand, lost an eye at Camperdown—an arm on the 1st of June—had three ribs broken at Copenhagen—was wounded at Trafalgar by a musket-ball, which, entering near the jugular vein, and traversing the pericardium, diaphragm, liver, and spleen, lacerated the larynx and femoral artery, and fractured the great bone of my left leg, which was amputated in consequence; in addition to which I had four of my front teeth knocked clean out of my head in a cutting-out expedition with our boats near Boulogne. I lived twenty-two years and nine months after this gentle treatment, and died a *Lieutenant*. I constantly see men cross this river who enjoyed the rank of post-captain many many years, but who were not born, or were at least, eating pap

at the time we were hammering away under Duncan, Howe, Nelson, Jarvis, and other commanders."

"May I ask, sir," inquired one of the by-standers, "if you ever remonstrated with the men then in power, and gave them a statement of your services?"

"Yes, again, and again, and again; but possessing no interest, and not being able to prove by my pedigree that I could claim relationship with dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, barons, or baronets, I was invariably bowed out of the room after the following question had been put to me:—'Do you think, sir, we can make vacancies for every troublesome applicant who thinks proper to pester us?' Most truly might I have answered, 'Yes, my lord, I do; for you daily contrive to find vacancies for the sons, brothers, nephews, and cousins of what are called great men; and you apparently do so without the slightest difficulty, be their *claims* great or small.'"

"It has unfortunately long been the case in both services," observed an old Wellingtonian, "and so it will continue as long as the far greater part of the most prominent and lucrative situations in the navy and army are considered the birthright of the aristocracy: a nest-egg laid expressly for them. *We* have done with those matters; but, having left behind us on the opposite banks of the Styx many for whom we feel the greatest interest, it is to be hoped that a more fair, just, and rational system

will, by some means or other, be introduced ere long."

"Come along, Ned; let us see of what the next conclave consists. Lawyers, of all sorts and kinds, I do declare. There they are, some with gowns and wigs, and some without, talking as intently as ever about Court of King's Bench, Nisi Prius, briefs, habendums, redendums, filing bills, caveats, mittimuses, and all that sort of thing. Many a poor devil *they* have been the means of putting in *quod*, but the old ferryman now has them hard in hand; the tables, in fact, are turned, and they are perfectly harmless, much as their chums on the opposite side may be disposed to be otherwise."

CHAPTER II.

A MIXTURE OF TRUTH AND FICTION.

"I BELIEVE, Colonel Havresack, you are lately from the opposite bank," said Captain Blazeaway, an old Minden officer, "and can, I dare say, give me some information on a point that interests me deeply; the new hat which (it is whispered here) is about to adorn the craniums of the British infantry.* It will be a *cocked* one, I *hope*; and, in the re-adoption of that admirable head-gear, I hail with joy the first symptoms of a return of a most becoming and convenient style of dress which, I am told, has been so unaccountably discontinued for many years, and in times when above all others it was most desirable that it should exist in all its glories; I mean the period of (what I have heard termed) the great struggle in the Peninsula."

"May I ask," said Ned Havresack, "what kind of costume you allude to?"

"What kind of costume, sir? Why, what kind *can* I possibly allude to but that which we wore in

* That execrable invention styled the Albert cap.

the glorious days of Minden? In that bloody battle I got my quietus by a 6-pound shot, and a speedy passage hither. Yes, sir, in those days we *did* dress and look like soldiers; and so beautifully tight were our leather inexpressibles made, that it required the assistance of my servant and another man of my company to pull them on, and an equal degree of force to drag them off again. Then, sir, over a head of hair well greased and powdered, and tied so tight at the back of the head that I have often seen men's eyes start out of their sockets, was placed a large cocked hat put on square to the front. There *are* men, Colonel Havresack, in all communities and in all professions, ever prone to find fault; and I *have* heard malcontents complain somewhat impatiently of the painful pokes in the eyes which they received from the hats of the men on their right and left hand; and I *have* known instances also of eyes being fairly punched out thereby; but no reasonable being would condemn so extremely convenient and comfortable a head-dress for such trifling reasons. What could have induced the Duke of Wellington to allow his men to throw aside also long black gaiters, thickly studded with gilt buttons (the putting on of which seldom occupied more than twelve minutes) and to substitute for them those vile, ugly, uncomfortable, inconvenient, unsoldier-like, loose trousers? I am somewhat incredulous, Colonel Havresack (excuse me for

saying so), and cannot place implicit reliance on the thousand-and-one stories I have heard related by passengers who arrived here hourly during the Peninsular contest. Pray, let me ask you, if the French had also become so degenerate as to give up wearing cocked hats, tight shorts, long gaiters, powder, pomatum, and other ingredients, so indispensably necessary to the efficiency and high discipline of an army ?"

"Degenerate or not," replied Havresack, "the French *did* contrive to get on without such matters, and troublesome customers we often found them."

"Then, sir, the enigma is at once explained," said the Minden veteran; "for had the French *stuck* to their original style of dress, the British army must inevitably have been driven with ignominy and disgrace from the Peninsula, instead of planting their banners on the soil of France, as I am told they actually did."

"Adieu, Captain Blazeaway. Let us stroll onwards, Harry; and pray do tell me who those are in such earnest conversation, examining the opposite bank with as much attention as if they contemplated throwing a pontoon-bridge across. I am certain I have seen some of them when on the other side of the Styx."—"To be sure you have, and likewise on the banks of the Tagus, Guadiana, Douro, Tormes, Ebro, Bidassoa, and a hundred other rivers. They are British officers who were in the Portuguese service, most of whom drew immensely valuable prizes in the

lottery, which gave them a lift of fifteen or twenty years at least, and send them with a hop, skip, and a jump over the heads of hundreds of veterans who thought proper to stick to the British service, many of whom had been warring for years against the worst and most deadly of tropical climates before the war in the Peninsula commenced. Much credit, nevertheless, is due to them for putting into good form a mere rabble (for so the Portuguese army was before British officers organized it), and for enabling it, when fighting in conjunction with its British allies, to contend with the troops of France. I am not, however, one of those who *go the whole hog*, and, like some of yonder group, gravely assert that the Portuguese troops were equal to the British! No, no, Ned; very few who served in those days will give much credence to *that;* and you and I, who have had some experience in the Peninsular war, know the full value of such opinions."

"When in India, Harry, I've often heard the very same opinions expressed by officers of the Company's service, who pronounced the Sepoys quite as good soldiers as the British, and superior to them in some respects. I remember once putting a question to an officer of Sepoys to the following effect, and it certainly puzzled him not a little to answer it:—'If you were ordered to storm the breach of a fortress, and to select five hundred men for the purpose, would you, if you had your choice, take five hundred Sepoys or five hundred British?'

"To this plain, intelligible, and simple question, I received only an evasive reply, in which the sobriety of the Sepoys and their obedience to their officers were highly commended and much dwelt on; but, valuable as those qualities are (and all military men know they are so), something more is requisite for men to force their way up a breach under a murderous fire of grape, musketry, and hand grenades."

"Look, Harry, look! is not that tall gaunt figure *Old Annihilation?* *—It is! it is! surely I cannot be mistaken."—"You're quite right, Ned; 'tis he, as sure as eggs are eggs; and I've a great notion he has recently been ferried across. I never could clearly ascertain *why* that name was given him by his old comrades. Some are inclined to think it was in consequence of the great number of Frenchmen annihilated in various battles by his battalion; and others attribute the appellation to *his own battalion* having been annihilated (on an average) about six times in every campaign, and recruited again with surprising rapidity."

"Ay, they were real resurrection boys; slain to-day, and rejoining their battalion the next."

"There's Jack Evergreen, or my name's not Havresack. Let us join him and ascertain how long he has been on this side the river."

"Welcome amongst us, my dear Jack! You've

* A British officer in the Portuguese service.

been a long time coming, and almost all your Peninsular and Waterloo friends and comrades are here before you. What sent you across to us at last?"

"Thereby hangs a tale, Ned; and you must allow me to tell it in my own way. You must know, then, that in spite of the roasting, toasting, grilling, and broiling of West India and Spanish laws, the trifling ailments occasioned thereby in the shape of yellow and other malignant fevers, agues, &c., &c., &c., and the grape and musketry of the French, I contrived to hold on tolerably well on the other side the Styx, and I firmly believe I should have continued there some time longer, but for one untoward occurrence. I had been indisposed for some days, but my Medicos assured me, in the most positive terms, that there was no organic disease, no irregular action or irritation of the neuralgic system, no predisposition to obesity, that my pulse was regular, and beat 87 times only per minute, that the vertebral region was uninjured, that there was no splenetic affection, and that, in short, I should soon be all right again. They did one morning suggest putting me into the mesmeric trance, and they talked also of applying cataplasms, to both of which I gave a positive veto. In this state of things my blockhead of a servant walked up to my bed-side, and gave me a printed circular from some confounded undertaker, the contents of which were to the following effect:—

"That he continued to furnish funerals at extremely moderate prices, a list of which would be found underneath—

	£	s.	d.
An elegant coffin, covered with superfine cloth, decorated with superior black furniture, containing an inner shell and lead-coffin, wadded and lined with silk, with mattress and pillow complete . . .	9	9	0
A handsome ditto, covered with superfine cloth, &c. .	4	16	0
A respectable ditto, do. do. . . .	2	10	0

"Can you, then, much wonder at my experiencing a sudden and serious relapse, and appearing here amongst my old and much-valued Peninsular and Waterloo comrades? I took especial good care to give positive directions about my funeral, and to insist on being interred in a *respectable coffin*, the cost of which was to be £2 10*s.*; but that the undertaker who had been the cause of my being handed over so suddenly to Old Charon should furnish neither coffin nor anything connected with the funeral."

"Jack, Jack, you've not yet forgotten your old tricks; and this *case* of yours closely resembles a *fictitious* one, which, by some means or other, you contrived to have laid before an assemblage of Medico-

chirurgical big-wigs at Estremos, soon after the storming of Badajoz. They vowed vengeance against the concoctor of that complicated case, so replete with misery and distress; and offered a large reward to any one who would bring the offender to light, but so well did your emissary manage the business, that they could never make head or tail of it."

"It 's a true bill, Ned. I certainly puzzled and excited the bile of the Medicos pretty considerably on that as well as on many other occasions.* I like to look back on those days; and we 'll have a little discussion about them anon."

* Evergreen did contrive to have a most curious surgical case laid before a large assemblage of physicians and surgeons at Estremos, which made them exceedingly indignant and angry.

CHAPTER III.

MORE TRUTH THAN FICTION IN HAVRESACK'S STORY.

"I 'VE been exceedingly remiss," said Havresack, "in not sooner introducing you to each other. Evergreen, this is an old and much valued comrade of mine, Captain Harry Bugle, who fought in many a bloody field in the Peninsula and South of France, and whose accounts on the other side the Styx were settled in a summary manner by a musket ball at Waterloo. And this, Harry, is a very dear friend, Colonel Jack Evergreen, who was at the storming of Monte Video, and in the bloody business at Buenos Ayres, where he got a dreadful crack in the caput and a splinter of a shell in the leg; he is one of the oldest hands, also, of the Light Division of the Peninsular Army, and a Waterloo man to boot."

"This introduction," observed Evergreen, "is perfectly unnecessary; for, if I am not greatly out in my reckoning, Captain Bugle and I have frequently met before. Were you not a Lieutenant in one of Picton's Light Companies in the

Peninsular war? To be sure you were; I could have sworn to it. Our two divisions were so constantly engaged together, in the laudable employment of breaking Frenchmen's heads—and thus unceasingly supplying Old Charon with such heavy cargoes that he could scarcely contrive to ferry them across without assistance—that we may at once claim acquaintance. You have heard, Ned, what sent Bugle and myself across this un-re-passable stream, and now let us know what brought you here."

"I'll put it in as small a compass as I can," was Havresack's reply, "and here it goes:—

"I carried the King's colours of my Regiment in Egypt, and was wounded in the glorious action of the 21st of March; went for a couple of years to the West Indies, where I patronised *dignity* and all other kinds of balls; smoked cigars, drank sangaree, sangarorum, cold punch, porter cap, and every sort of fluid (cold water, weak tea, and small beer excepted); bestowed maledictions unceasingly on musquitoes, scorpions, centipedes, tarantulas, woodslaves, and an infinity of other reptiles, which appear to have been created for the purpose of adding to the numerous blessings and comforts with which the Torrid Zone abounds; had a desperate attack of yellow fever, and narrowly escaped being devoured by landcrabs; exchanged to a regiment in the Medi-

terranean, and was in the Light Brigade at Maida, where the mustachios of Regnier's Veterans did not save them from a good hiding. I fought next at Roleia and Vimiera, and had the proud satisfaction of seeing that French army which marched from Lisbon for the express purpose of driving the English into the sea, beaten to its heart's content, and 13 pieces of its artillery taken. In the retreat to Corunna, and in the battle fought near its walls, I next figured. Six months after our return from Corunna, Walcheren brought us up; and there we had a far more deadly and destructive enemy to contend with than swords and bullets. I nearly fell a victim to that dreadful marsh fever by which so many thousands of our brave fellows perished miserably. No sooner were our ranks recruited, than we were again sent to the Peninsula; and, as both of you were actors in that bloody drama, I need not enter into particulars, or remind you of the time we spent amongst the ungrateful Spaniards and Portuguese, whose complete liberation from the yoke of France we succeeded in obtaining for them, after a long protracted struggle against such continual privations, hardships, and dangers, as can be comprehended only by those who participated in them. They were such, my good friends, as neither the British army nor any other ever had to contend with before, or, in all probability, ever will again. I was wounded in the right arm at Badajoz, and received a musket-ball, at Orthes, within

an inch of the carotid artery, which nearly finished me. I next went with the expedition against New Orleans, but returned to Europe in time to be present at the battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo. The wolf having now been driven from the door, reduction on a large scale was the order of the day in both our fleet and army (the household troops excepted, who remained intact), and I found myself a captain on half-pay. On being subsequently placed on the full-pay list, I was appointed to a regiment in India, where, between Burmese savages, stockades, cholera, and other devilments, I was in due time reduced to a miserable sallow skeleton, and being placed, *pro tem.*, *hors de combat*, got a furlough to England. I had then been in the army five-and-twenty years, and as those years had not been spent in a state of inactivity, I flattered myself that I should be allowed to succeed to a majority, *by purchase*, in some regiment or other; but on making application for that step, I was given to understand that my services did not by any means entitle me to it, and that I had better rejoin my regiment in India as a captain."

"What!" said Evergreen, indignantly; "your claims not such as to entitle you to a majority? You, who saw more fighting in six months than three-fourths of the general officers in our service had ever seen until the Peninsular war commenced? Why, surely *your* claims to a majority, or even to the rank of a Major-General, must have been at that period

twenty times stronger than those which any members of fashionable and privileged corps, officered principally by scions of the aristocracy, could produce; who are, nevertheless, gazetted in considerable numbers every Friday evening to Lieutenant-Colonelcies, without ever having served one hour out of their native land. Are you aware that a great many of our old Peninsular *Generals* were not more than *forty years of age* when they commanded divisions and brigades, and that many of them reached the rank of full colonels in eight, ten, or twelve years,—or, in other words, in *half* the time that we three were serving as subalterns, or captains? With these facts staring people in the face, it is really carrying the joke too far to tell a man who has been shot at like a target in every quarter of the globe for a quarter of a century, and braved the worst of tropical climates, that he has no claims to a regimental majority, with or without purchase! Why not speak out at once and tell the applicant in plain terms, that, as he is unconnected with the influential and the great, he must make up his mind to be passed over in every Gazette by those who are, and that he need not calculate on his long and faithful services? But, pardon me, I pray, for interrupting you in your story; and now proceed."

"Back to India I accordingly went; and the Burmese war being at an end, I spent many years in the enjoyment of the luxuries of the East, viz., eating

curries, and other spiced dishes, sufficiently hot and strong to embalm and convert into a mummy in fifteen calendar months any human being; living in bungalows, ventilated and cooled by Punkahs; drinking therein sundry bottles of Hodson's pale ale daily; riding on elephants, and shooting from the howdahs on their backs at everything in the shape of game, from a quail to a tiger, boa constrictor, buffalo, or wild boar; travelling Dâk from Cawnpore to Barruckpore, from Barruckpore to Bangalore; riding from post to pillar; sometimes *with* and sometimes *without* gram for the horses; smoking hookahs, and blowing up hookah-badars for neglecting to keep the smoking apparatus in proper trim. Add to these an occasional touch at chicken-hazard, *écarté*, &c., &c., and you know how the twelve years of my life were spent in India the second time I went there. At length I succeeded to a majority in my regiment by purchase, after having served almost entirely on foreign stations. By this time old Charon began to speculate on having me as a passenger, but he was out in his calculation as to the *time when*. I struggled on for some years against a complication of disorders, brought on by the severe trials I had undergone; and a short time before I joined you here, a brevet made its appearance, which elevated me to the rank of Lieut.-Colonel;—and now you know my history."

"The same thing, my good fellow," said Bugle,

"long *has* existed, *still* exists, and will *continue* to exist until the people, through their representatives in Parliament, express their disapprobation, in the strongest and most decided manner, of a system which awards rapid promotion and every description of favour to certain privileged corps, whose services are principally confined to their own country, at the immediate expense of the *real workmen* of the army, who live, die, and rot amongst the tropics, and whose regiments are too often made the stepping-stones to rank for men of wealth and interest. But the English, as a nation, are so inconceivably ignorant of and indifferent about everything connected with the army, that there is no chance of amelioration from *that* quarter. That it should have been so long tolerated is extraordinary enough, but it is still more so that men should be found who, although not members of particularly favoured or privileged corps, are ever ready and willing to *defend* (to *attempt* to defend, I should rather say) so unjust a system. There is, however, no paucity of men who exist but in the smiles of the great, and who prize a nod from one of them far more than they do the apple of their own eye. Let us postpone further discussions on these matters for the present; and now, Evergreen, do let us have some account of the devilries which you light-division fellows were everlastingly playing off, when an interval

of rest from marching and fighting offered opportunities; and as you, Jack Evergreen, were, if reports are to be credited, a notorious instigator of those pranks and frolics, no one, either on this or the opposite bank of the Styx, is better able than yourself to enlighten us on those matters."

CHAPTER IV.

EVERY WORD OF THIS CHAPTER IS TRUE.

"Now, Evergreen, let me ask if you were personally acquainted with an officer of the Light Division, who was the sole inventor of that singular and ingenious mode of *smoking bacon in the most expeditious manner possible;* or, as he termed it, *firing a pig?*"

"Oh, yes," replied Jack, "I not only was more intimately acquainted with him throughout my life than with any other person, but I knew perfectly well the whole process, which was as follows:—An embargo having been laid on the first large pig that could be found, a tube sufficiently long to reach from his head to his tail was manufactured with numerous folds of the thickest and stoutest brown paper, strengthened with cords; it was then filled with gunpowder moistened with water and made into a paste, which caused it to burn like a sky-rocket. This done, the tube was tied to the tail of the pig, brought horizontally along his back, the end of it placed between his ears and fastened round his neck, which gave him much the appearance of a unicorn. But let me

digress for a moment, and observe that the most enthusiastic supporters of Martin's praiseworthy Act, passed for the Protection of Animals, would have had their risible organs excited if they had witnessed a scene which I am about to describe; for although the grunter was always much astonished and somewhat frightened, he was never injured by going through his fiery ordeal. Market-days in Spanish villages were considered particularly well adapted for those bacon-smoking operations. To some narrow lane, therefore, leading into the square, the animal being taken and a match applied to the tube, off he went at the top of his speed, grunting and screeching vehemently, looking neither to the right nor to the left, but charging furiously in amongst the market people, the crater of the volcano in the vicinity of his nose incessantly issuing forth fire and sparks in abundance, and endangering everything ignitable which happened to be in his line of march. Picture to yourselves the scene of confusion and dismay occasioned by his sudden and unexpected appearance, running full tilt at old women and young ones, muleteers, ecclesiastics of all grades, vendors of garlic, onions, bacon, sausages, eggs, fruit, earthenware, bread, chesnuts, hogs'-lard, and a variety of other sorts of merchandise; and, after upsetting everything which obstructed his forward movement, bringing up in some stable filled with mules, donkeys, and chopped straw. Often have I heard every saint in the calendar invoked, and curses loud and deep

liberally bestowed on heretical, pig-firing Englishmen, in an incredibly short space of time after the entrance of this *porcus unicornis* into the plaza. On one occasion I really thought my commission not worth half-an-hour's purchase; for I was mainly instrumental in igniting and starting a pig through the market-place of Fuente Guinaldo, when it was unusually crowded; and after my emissary had made a practicable breach clean through the multitude, he bolted into a stable filled with straw, with the volcano on his snout in full play. Fortunately our soldiers contrived to extinguish the fire in its infancy, and there the thing ended for *that* day. Had it been otherwise, your friend Evergreen would never have reached the rank of colonel; but, in all probability, have been cut short off in his career by the sentence of a court-martial, for giving roving commissions to inflammable swine in the dominions of our ally, Ferdinando Septimo, of Spain, frightening his subjects nearly to death, and endangering their houses and property. There was, in fact, scarcely a village between the rivers Coa and Agueda, that was not at some period or other in imminent danger of conflagration by the frequent repetition of those pastimes. But one of the most ludicrous scenes of the kind that ever occurred was in Fuentes d'Onore, the year before the battle was fought on that spot. The gallant chief of my old corps was listening with great delight, one fine evening in the month of May, to the band playing a favourite air of his,

'Here's a health to those far away.' I contrived that a pig should be ignited and started from behind the ruins of an old tower which, both of you remember, stands some way up the hill leading down to the house of the priest of the village. The animal took precisely the direction I wished; and just at the moment when the band were executing with considerable taste and feeling that part of the air, 'When perhaps we are saying farewell for ever,' he charged right through the villagers and soldiers, who formed a circle round the musicians, put a sudden stop to their farther proceedings, and caused such confusion and astonishment as you can perhaps conceive, but to which I am quite unable to do justice by any attempt at describing. 'That's Evergreen again at his old tricks, I 'd bet a hundred dollars,' exclaimed our chief; but although *I* could see plainly enough from behind the ruins all that passed below, none of the amateurs of music could see *me*, so that it was never actually brought home to the real offender."

"Come, come, Evergreen," exclaimed Bugle, "you have as good as acknowledged yourself the inventor of that novel mode of clearing streets and market-places, and I have a strong suspicion it was you also who devoted so much valuable time to the instruction of a certain Hibernian volunteer in geography and other accomplishments. When this volunteer, after one of the bloody battles in the Peninsula, had obtained a commission, and was ordered to proceed

to the dépôt in England, in charge of a few worn-out men, was it not you who drew out a route which you assured him was by far the most easy and pleasant from Valladolid to Oporto, *viâ* Jerusalem, Otaheite, Kamtschatka, Circassia, and Berlin, and that when he reached the Po, he could easily pass to Oporto by the canal which unites that river with the Douro, and there embark for England? and, but for the timely interposition of one of the deputies or assistants of the Quartermaster-General's department, would not this accomplished geographer actually have applied to Sir George Murray to be allowed to proceed by that simple and practicable route?"

"I plead guilty," said Jack, "as I do also to inserting in the orderly book of my company a general order for 600 men of the 3rd, 4th, and Light Divisions to assemble next morning at daybreak for the purpose of cutting a canal from the Mississippi to the Ganges. They were to take with them three days' rations, ready cooked, and to receive instructions from the chief engineer, who would meet them in the plain between El Bodon and Ciudad Rodrigo. My own corps was to furnish fifty men, one captain, and two subalterns; one of whom I took good care should be the Hibernian (now no longer a volunteer, but an ensign) who, on reading the order, instantly fell to work to scrape together food wherewith to sustain nature for three days and nights; but as in those times prog was not superabundant, we were obliged to put a

positive veto to his proceedings, which, by entirely denuding the scanty larder of my company's mess, would have caused the joke to be against ourselves. Beginning at length to smell a rat, off he trotted to inspect the orderly book of some other company, and finding nothing in it touching the fatigue party of 600 men, the feasible plan I had sketched for bringing Asiatics and Americans together so easily, and making them, as it were, one and the same family, fell to the ground.

"Having candidly confessed a few of my peccadillos, let me acknowledge, ere we proceed to discuss other matters, that I was the culprit who, the day before Ciudad Rodrigo was assaulted, assured the volunteer (confidentially) that the troops destined to storm the breaches were the Royal Waggon Train, supported by the 14th Light Dragoons *mounted.* He rapidly promulgated this important intelligence to every one he met, and an arrangement which the Commander-in-Chief very possibly wished to be kept secret until the moment of action arrived thus became known to all hands of the Light Division, and, for aught I know, to all the other troops which composed the besieging army."

CHAPTER V.

CONTAINS MUCH TRUTH AND VERY LITTLE FICTION.

"LET us saunter leisurely on to a certain spot, which I have seldom visited without finding in it two eccentric characters—Major Angus M'Sneshan and Captain Blazeaway, engaged in earnest conversation."

This proposal of Bugle's being assented to, the three friends proceeded; but they had not gone far ere Havresack, on meeting a group of a dozen or two, exclaimed, "They must have been clerks in public offices. I perfectly recognise several; and, as we stroll along, I'll tell you an anecdote of one of them."

"At the conclusion of one of the campaigns in the Peninsula, I obtained a short leave of absence to proceed to England on urgent business, and a brother officer of mine, Lord Charles Beaumontville, accompanied me for a similar purpose. Having landed at Falmouth, we posted immediately up to London, threw aside the wretched toggery with which, by way of Mufti, we had rigged ourselves out at Lisbon,

purified ourselves by the aid of hot baths from the misery, discomfort, and those lively little travelling companions whose society no one ever escaped who was long located in Spain or Portugal; put tailors, bootmakers, and hatters into requisition, and, thus metamorphosed, we set out for a certain public office, where our business principally lay.

"On being ushered into an apartment in which an excellent fire blazed, a conceited, fancifully dressed young man, who appeared to be on excellent terms with himself, after having eyed us for some time from head to foot, asked, in an abrupt manner, what we wanted?

"Somewhat nettled at this rude reception, I replied with warmth, that we wished to see Lord Featherstone* on very particular business, which had obliged us to cross the Bay of Biscay in the middle of a tempestuous winter, and that we must recross it without loss of time, as we intended to be with our army again before the next campaign opened."

"'Can't see him,' was the reply of this Jack-in-office, 'he's engaged.' 'We *must* see him, sir, and we request you will inform his lordship of our wish,' said I, in return.

"'Can't see him, I tell you once again. Do you suppose he is to be at the beck and command of

* Lord Palmerston, who was Secretary at War.

every officer who thinks proper to bother him daily and hourly?'

"The word 'puppy' escaped my lips; and, turning from him, I said, 'Lord Charles Beaumontville, let us send up our cards by one of the porters, or by any person we can find, as this mighty fine gentleman thinks it would degrade him to do so.

"'I wish we had him for a few weeks in one of our bivouacks in the Peninsula; if we did not take him down a peg or two, and make him cry, 'peccavi,' I'm much mistaken.'

"On hearing me thus address my companion, who, to his horror and dismay, he now ascertained was the son of a duke, this insolent puppy instantly altered his note, his visage became considerably elongated, and, stammering out some lame apology, he offered himself to take up our cards to Lord Featherstone.

"The consequence was that our business was speedily and satisfactorily transacted; and in a few weeks we found ourselves once again in the land of priests, ignorance, garlic, salt fish, onions, rancid oil, paper cigars, fleas, and other insects which shall be nameless."

"How extremely like," said Bugle, "the insufferable airs frequently played off by some of the members of one of the civil departments in the Peninsula. I remember once travelling from a dépôt for sick and wounded in the south of Portugal to rejoin my regiment on the north-eastern frontier, having no one

with me but my servant, one baggage-mule, and a saddle-horse. On arriving rather late one afternoon at a village, where I intended to halt for the night, and (it being a commissariat station) to draw rations, I made out my return, agreeably to the prescribed rules and regulations, signed it, and despatched my servant with it to the commissary. On my man returning without the rations, or having been able to obtain an interview with that vastly important personage, I posted off in no very good humour to his domicile to ascertain the reason. On asking *one* of his Portuguese servants (for you must recollect that those gentry usually had large establishments) where his master was, he replied, that the GENERAL was at dinner, and could not be disturbed; and that, as he never transacted business after that meal, I could not get my rations until next day. Highly exasperated at this unparallelled insolence, I said, 'Tell your master, that if he does not instantly go to the stores and issue meat, bread, wine, and forage, agreeably to the return I sent him, I shall make such a report of him to the Commander-in-Chief, as soon as I reach the army, as will make his hair curl.'

"Finding that I was not to be trifled with, down stairs came this Deputy-Acting-Assistant-Commissary-*General*, with a fierce cocked hat on his head, a drooping snow-white plume, gilt spurs fully six inches in length, a blue coat covered with finery, and a purple velvet waistcoat, studded thickly with Tala-

vera buttons. Whether this *General*, as he styled himself, and caused himself to be styled by the wretched peasantry of a half-ruined village, fancied that he should strike me with awe by the splendour of his costume, I don't know; but I do know that he forked out the rations in double quick time, and the next morning I resumed my march."

"And," observed Evergreen, "I dare say, whilst you were wending your way through the cheerless country between Villa Velha and the Agueda, it sometimes struck you (it often has me) that such occurrences as those described by Havresack and yourself were to be met with daily amongst the underlings of public offices. There are exceptions to most rules, but it may be laid down as a pretty general axiom, that people on the opposite side the Styx experience far more rudeness and incivility from *understrappers* than from the heads of departments."

"'Tis just as I thought," said Bugle, as they drew near a little retired bay; "there they are in high argument; and, judging by their vehement gesticulations, I'd bet two dozen of champagne (if we had any on this side the river) to half-a-pint of Styx water, that they are at it, hammer-and-tongs, about Minden; Blazeaway insisting that the victory was due to the discipline and bravery of the Welsh Fusiliers (to which corps he belonged), and M'Sneshan claiming every credit for the Highland regiments.

But let us join them, and we may perhaps become enlightened a little on the point at issue between them."

"I maintain it, Major," said Blazeaway, "that the steadiness, high discipline, and valour of the Welsh Fusiliers, which enabled them to repel successfully the enemy who assailed them in front, rear, and flank at the same moment, was the main cause of our gaining that glorious victory. Yes, Major, *then* it was that the blood of the Cadwalladers, the Llewellyns, the Jenkins's, the Pughs, the Ap-Rices, the Jones's, the Lloyds, and the Ap-Griffiths, flowed like rain; *then* it was, sir, that the ancient Britons nobly upheld the glory of their country, and threw into the shade the exploits of all other corps."

"*Except*, I 'm thinking, those of the Highland regiments, whose exceeding gallantry outdid even that of your Welshmen," replied M'Sneshan.

"Hold hard, Major, hold hard," exclaimed the peppery Cambrian; "you Scots are perfect gluttons in such matters; and, not content with the numerous laurels which your brave troops have gathered in many a hard-fought field, you are too apt to lay claim to those which you have no pretension to whatever. How can your Highlanders take credit to themselves for any of the Minden honours, seeing that none of their regiments were there? Come, come, Major, give all hands their due, and cease to be such a monopolist."

"You don't mean to deny, I suppose," retorted the Scot with asperity, "that the *brunt* of most of the great battles, not only of our day, but of later date also, has invariably fallen on the Highland regiments? If you *do* entertain doubts on the subject, let me refer you to the three gentlemen who have just joined us; all of whom, having served many years after I was put in charge of old Charon, can speak with certainty of what took place in their day. May I take the liberty of asking, gentlemen, if a particularly prominent part was not played by the Highland regiments in all the battles of your time, both in the Peninsula and elsewhere? Did not the Highlanders lie in heaps at Talavera, Albuera, and Salamanca, and were not the breaches of Monte Video, Rodrigo, Badajoz, and San Sebastian actually choked with their dead bodies? Would not the battle of Waterloo have been lost, irretrievably *lost*, but for the Scotch regiments?"

"The life of a soldier, Major, of a British soldier especially, is a mere lottery," said Evergreen; "a regiment goes to any part of the globe to which it is ordered, and fights, *sans cérémonie*, against any foe it is directed to attack; and as a regiment cannot conveniently be in two different places at the same instant, it will account to you in a satisfactory manner for your brave countrymen not invariably playing first fiddle in *all* our battles. You particularize their distinguished conduct at Talavera,

Albuera, and Salamánca (which may undoubtedly be reckoned amongst the most bloody conflicts in the Peninsula), and at the storming also of four fortresses. Now it so happened that there were no Highland regiments in the two first-mentioned battles, and only *one* in the third; nor were any of your regiments engaged in storming or escalading either of the four fortresses mentioned by you. This observation I make merely to prove that John Bull, Pat, and Taffy have often made a good stand-up fight of it, and gained never-fading laurels, without receiving assistance from any other quarter. And, as to Waterloo—excuse my making the remark, Major—the farce of the superior prowess of your countrymen has really been kept up too long. I crossed the Styx very recently; and the same erroneous opinion which existed for more than a quarter of a century after the battle is still obstinately clung to by multitudes of people who have never given themselves the trouble to investigate the truth, or to know what *did* and what did *not* happen; but have contented themselves with garbled statements put forth by the ignorant, or by men blindly bigoted to everything northward of the Tweed. The gallantry of your countrymen at Waterloo has never been *exceeded*, but it was fully *equalled* by all the British troops who fought on their right and left. They formed, you should recollect, but a fractional part of Wellington's army; and, had I brought with

me across the Styx a copy of the return of killed and wounded, I should experience no great difficulty in proving to you that John Bull and Pat came in for their full share of the hammering and milling."

"You, Colonel Evergreen," muttered M'Sneshan, "are, I suspect, much like all the rest of the Southrons, who reluctantly accord that merit to the kilted warriors of the north which they have a right to claim. You deny also, I suppose, that it was the exceeding valour of the Highlanders which gained the battle of the 21st of March, in Egypt?"

"*I* do, Major, at all events," said Havresack, "for I had the honour of being there; and although I am most ready and willing to vouch for the admirable conduct of your countrymen, I will not do so at the expense of others, who conducted themselves fully as well in every possible respect; and, amongst other regiments, that of which Captain Blazeaway was a member at Minden."

"I despair, gentlemen," said the Major, "of inducing any of you to listen to reason and common sense, or to give credit to the notorious facts I have related, so truly honourable to my countrymen; and I shall cease, therefore, henceforth to attempt doing so.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AUTHOR STRONGLY SUSPECTS THAT THE "COLD-WATER-CURE SYSTEM" CAN FURNISH MANY CASES SIMILAR TO THE ONE RELATED IN THIS CHAPTER.

"CAN I believe my eyes.? Is that you, O'Houghlahan—you whom I left so lately on the opposite bank, in the enjoyment, apparently, of tolerably good health ? What brought you here so suddenly, and when did you cross the ferry ? "

At this question of Havresack's, the new comer, after having heaved a deep sigh and thrown a look of disgust at the waters of the stream which flowed at his feet, commenced his history nearly in the following words:—

"All things and all men must wear out in time: and sailors and soldiers, being much exposed to hardships and vicissitudes of climate, are generally located on this side the Styx earlier and in greater abundance than other people. I scarcely need tell you and

your friends, Bugle and Evergreen, with both of whom I have long been intimately acquainted, that I had a large share of hard service—first in the Eagle-catchers,* and subsequently in the Connaughts,† and that the harp and crown were borne triumphant in many a bloody field. Nor will you be surprised to hear that, after a time, I felt severely the effects of agues, fevers, and the ounce of lead which I received in the Pyrenees. I was not more addicted to teetotalism than yourselves, which is tantamount to saying that I drank lots of good Douro wine when I could get it, and bad black strap or rum and water when nothing better could be had; smoked Havannah cigars when they were come-at-able, and the strongest tobacco in a clay pipe in hard times. Whether those little indulgencies tended to aggravate a disease, the seeds of which had previously been sown, I can't say; but I was obliged at last to have medical advice; and at the particular request of an old maiden aunt, I consulted one of your *cold-water-cure* physicians. How I do abominate the sight of this Styx water; it reminds me so of the beverage I was recently drenched with. The mode of treatment I underwent is so extraordinary, and has such a strong tendency to furnish Old Charon continually with passengers, that I'll give you an outline of it. Having felt my pulse, examined my tongue, and asked various questions as to my general mode of living, the Medico

* † The 87th and 88th regiments, both Irish.

gave me every reason to believe that, if I adhered strictly to his prescriptions, I should soon be restored to perfect health.

"'You will, sir,' said he, "abstain from all fermented liquors, and drink instead nothing but cold water. You must be moderate, however, at the commencement, and not exceed a gallon-and-a-half in twenty-four hours; but after the first week you may increase the quantity, and by the time you have swallowed as much as would fill a moderately-sized fish-pond, I fully anticipate that your cure will be perfectly effected.'

I remonstrated against this atrocious plan, and reminded him that I was a man of a *certain age* (which, by the by, means an old fellow), and that, from the day I first put on a scarlet coat at sixteen years of age up to that moment, I had been in the habit of imbibing fluids of a much more generous description, whenever I could get them, which you all know was not always the case in our wet, cold, cheerless bivouacs in Spain. 'So much the worse, sir, so much the worse,' replied this Esculapius; 'your whole system requires a thorough change; we must see if we can't get the absorbents to act, and induce the lymphatics to do their duty; we must refrigerate a frame which has been, by your own admission, confoundedly heated, and stimulated, and roasted, and grilled, and shot at, and worn, and worked, for many years. If a liberal allowance of cold water, internally applied, does not produce those

much-to-be-desired effects we 'll see what wrapping you up in wet sheets will do.' With this consolatory assurance, and having ordered me to commence the cold water without delay, he took his departure. I rang the bell for my old and faithful servant, to whom I communicated the doctor's directions, and told him to bring me a gallon of water fresh from the pump, and a pint tumbler.

"'Bad luck, then, to that same doctor, say I,' muttered my man, 'he 'll be the death of your honour as sure as my name's Dennis Rooney, if you don't put some whisky or brandy into every glass, if it's only to kill the small varmin that I've often heard Doctor Martoch Malloney of the ould Connaughts say frequented water. A gallon-and-a-half a-day? Sure, that 's more than would have sarved the whole of the Eagle-catchers or the Connaughts for a day and night, barring the drop they 'd want for cooking the rations. They were the boys that never mixed good liquor, but always took it nate and plain.' In spite, however, of this logic, I set to, and in the first twelve hours contrived with great difficulty to get down three parts of a gallon without the adulteration so much recommended by Dennis. The consequence was that I felt six times as big as Daniel Lambert, and as cold and miserable as if I had been dieted on iceberg sandwiches and hailstones. In a fit of despair I rung the bell, and in came my servant. 'Dennis,' said I, 'I believe I 'm dying.' 'Troth, I 'll

engage you are,' replied he, 'if you 've drank all that water I left at your bedside. Let me give your honour a drop of brandy; 't will kill them tadpoles and devils you 've just swallowed, and that 's kicking up such a bobbery in your honour's inside.' This really appeared sound advice, and I therefore lost no time in sending down a large tumbler of brandy-and-water, very strong and very hot, with the twofold object of relieving my own horrid sensation, and of ascertaining also how the inmates alluded to by Dennis relished it. How it agreed with *them* I don't know, but I soon found myself quite a new man, and my sufferings were greatly allayed: at which Dennis began to chuckle amazingly, as it was a proof that his predictions had been correct. At that moment in marched the Doctor, to whom I related all I had suffered, and by what means I had obtained relief.

"'Good Heavens, sir,' said he, 'I wonder you are not a dead man! That sensation of enlargement, that Daniel Lambertism of which you complain, and those feelings of excessive inward frigidity, are precisely what I wished to produce; and by dispelling those soothing sensations and highly-favourable symptoms by the aid of that odious compound, hot brandy-and-water, you may fairly be said to have disarmed your physician. But there 's one more chance, and we 'll try it at once. Have the goodness to direct your servant to dip your sheets into cold water, wring them a little, and then replace them on your bed.

Do you then, sir, get in between them, drink freely of cold water, and endeavour to obtain some refreshing sleep.'

"'By the powers, then, Doctor, you 'll finish him intirely,' said Dennis, on hearing this dreadful sentence passed on me. 'A bivouac in a rainy night in the Pyrenees is no joke, but this is a deal worse. Och, murther; I wish we had ye in thim mountains for a month or two; ye 'd never order any poor devil to sleep in wet sheets again, I 'll engage.'

"After what I had so lately suffered, you may easily imagine that I hesitated for some time whether to follow this desperate prescription or not; but as my aunt had the highest opinion of the physician, into bed I went, drank a pint and half of cold water, and endeavoured in vain to procure that refreshing sleep which I had been led to believe awaited me. I soon began to shiver and shake like a dog in a wet sack, and my teeth chattered ten times more violently than when I had the Walcheren ague. 'Well,' thought I, 'if this is refrigeration and inducing the lymphatics to perform their functions, it's bad sport enough; and if it is not, moreover, a prelude to *hic jacet* Lucius O'Houghlahan, I 'm no judge, that 's all. This is no go; I 'll cut and run out of those infernal wet sheets, and pitch the Doctor and his cold-water-cure system to the devil;' and, suiting the action to the word, I rang the bell violently. 'Dennis,' said I, 'he 's done for me *this* time, I do believe. Get

some hot brandy-and-water as quickly as possible, and make as large a fire as you can without burning the house down about our ears.'

"'Master dear, master dear, what 's your ailment? what 's come over ye?' replied my old and faithful follower. 'Blood-and-ounds! what made ye listen to that —— Doctor, and get into thim wet sheets? Didn't I tell ye how 't would be? But, may be, three or four stiff glasses of hot brandy-and-water would warm and comfort yer Honor, and drive that ague out of yer bones, that makes ye shake so terribly.'

"This nostrum of his I forthwith proceeded to administer to myself; but it was too late—my death-warrant was signed; and, after struggling for several days against a violent rheumatic fever, and various other maladies brought on by the *cold-water-cure system*, I paid the debt of nature; and the last recollection I have of what occurred on the opposite side the Styx, immediately before my dissolution, was my affectionate servant kneeling by my bedside, kissing my hand, and, with the true Irish howl, asking, in the most touching accents, what made me die? Water, it is well known, will find its own level; and my opinion is, that when applied in the manner it was to me, it 's a pretty general leveller. At all events, it soon levelled me with the dust; and here I am, at last, amongst my old friends and comrades."

CHAPTER VII.

TOO TRUE.

"ONE can scarcely be surprised, O'Houghlahan," said Bugle, "at your disliking the look of this Styx water, after the severe discipline you underwent on the opposite bank, when under the care of the cold-water-cure physician; but you must endeavour to conquer the aversion, for it is the only beverage you are likely to get on this side the ferry. And now I wish much to find and introduce all three of you to General Demilune, who was killed at Blenheim. He must have been quite an enthusiast in his profession, if I may judge by the manner in which he questions and cross-questions me whenever we meet, on a multiplicity of occurrences which have taken place since Charon shipped him off for this bank, on all of which he appears anxious to obtain the fullest information. If we go as far as that deep bend in the river, it's a a sure find; I never yet went there without seeing him. I am quite right; there he is, in earnest con-

versation apparently with some Fontenoy officers." Demilune was much pleased at being introduced to the three friends, as all of them had lately crossed the Styx, and, having seen a great deal of service, would be able to gratify him by answering some of his questions. On O'Houghlahan describing the *cold-water-cure system*, and the effects produced by it on himself, the General became convulsed with laughter, and vowed that if teetotalism, drenching people with cold water and wrapping them up in wet sheets, had been the fashion in his day, the glorious battle of Blenheim could not possibly have been won.

"Your servant, Major, was a wise man," said he, "and had you taken his advice, I should not, perhaps, have met you for some time longer; but as I have now that pleasure, I hope you and your friends will enlighten me on several points which I confess myself ignorant of."

Having been assured that they should be happy to give him all the information in their power, the General began his interrogatories.

"I have been given to understand by many who have crossed the Styx long since I took up my position here, that in some branches of the British Army —the Engineers and Artillery—General Officers are *certain* of succeeding to Colonelcies of battalions by seniority, as they become vacant in their respective corps. How are those things managed in the *Line?*

Have they also the benefit of the same (as it appears to me) just and rational system ?"

"Very far from it," quoth O'Houghlahan; "the poles are scarcely more wide apart than the modes of handling the different branches of the British Army. You have been correctly informed as to the two Ordnance Corps, and now I 'll tell you how it frequently fares with Linesmen. *A.* and *B.*, two youths, aspirants for military fame, appear in the same *Gazette*; *A.* as an Ensign in the Guards, which in one hour sends him over the heads of all the Second Lieutenants, Ensigns, and Cornets in the Service, many of whom have been serving for a length of time in bad climates. *B.*, soon after seeing his name in black and white, is most probably shipped for the Colonies, and there he luxuriates for an indefinite time in that most enviable of ranks—a *full Ensign.* If he proves an overmatch for cholera in the East Indies, or yellow fever in the West, he reappears in his native land, after an absence of many years, as a Lieutenant, which step 't is likely enough he purchased. Unless there happens to be an unusual demand for troops on foreign stations, he spends three or four years at home—the greater part of them in out-quarters in Ireland—at the expiration of which, his regiment receives an order to prepare again for foreign service. Should its last station have been the West Indies, the chances are that the scene will now be changed to the East; and out he goes, with the cer-

tainty of sojourning there at least twenty years. All those duties he performs with a good grace; and if a far greater portion of good fortune attends him than falls to the lot of thousands, and he weathers cholera, fevers, dysenteries, and the swords and bullets of the enemy, he makes his appearance once more on the *home stage* (a stage which his schoolfellow *A.* has, in all human probability, never left), broken in constitution, and, mayhap, a Major. He gets three or four years of home service as before; and when the time arrives for embarking again, either for the frozen regions of Canada, the West Indies, or elsewhere, the *quondam youth B.* finds himself an old worn-out fellow. But he sticks to the harness; and, after paying a good round sum for the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of his old corps, off he sails again. *B.* has not long reached his new destination, ere he sees in the newspapers, just arrived from England, the death of the Colonel of his regiment; upon which he and his officers immediately begin speculating as to who will succeed him. The next packet puts an end to all surmise; and his schoolfellow *A.* (now a General Officer) appears in the *Gazette*, as Colonel of the regiment."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Demilune, "how rapid the promotion of *A.* must have been! It may be concluded, however, that his services were proportionably great."

"Not a bit of it," said Evergreen; "O'Houghla-

han has drawn a faithful picture; and it is deeply to be regretted that examples of the kind are so abundant; and, moreover, that doing the duties of London and Windsor, having free access to Almack's, and to the dinner-parties and *soirées* of the great, are surer passports to rank and emolument than a long life passed in the East and West Indies."

"Is it possible? Can such things be?" exclaimed Demilune. "Do you mean to say that regiments of the Line are *often* so disposed of?"

"I do indeed mean to say so," said Evergreen; "and you will perhaps be surprised to hear that, not very many years ago, *more than half of them* had Guardsmen for their Colonels; few (if any) of whom had ever seen the East or West Indies, except on the map of the world. The injustice, however, of such a mode of proceeding is gradually becoming manifest; for when I crossed the Styx the other day, not much more than a *third part* was so officered: a pretty large infringement, too, on what Linesmen might, with great propriety (to borrow a favourite expression of officers of Artillery and Engineers) term *their birthright.*"

"I can put the whole thing into a nut-shell for you, General," said Bugle, "and in a few words fully explain everything. The Colonels Commandant of battalions of Engineers and Artillery are invariably from their own corps, and the regiments of Guards are held equally sacred. Were a General of the

Line to express a wish to be appointed to the Colonelcy of either, he would be consigned to a lunatic asylum; and, by way of an additional balm to that highly-favoured branch, a General of Cavalry is occasionally slipped into it, and he finds himself Colonel of the 30th, 40th, or 50th regiment, although he never did an hour's duty in the Infantry. But the application of an Infantry General for the Colonelcy of a Cavalry regiment would be almost as likely to be successful as if he were to petition the Pope and all the Cardinals to resign in his favour, and to place him in the Papal chair."

"Has no one," asked Demilune, "ever remonstrated against so cruel, unjust, and indefensible a system?"

"Yes," replied Bugle; "but those who have done so, although actuated by the purest and most disinterested motives, have been designated by a certain clique, grumblers, innovators, men disappointed in the Service, and therefore desirous of overturning long-established rules and regulations, which *they* declare have always worked admirably—that is, for themselves and others, possessing powerful interest. It is the *system* which is so reprehensible; no blame can or ought to be attached to those who are allowed to benefit by it. I have sometimes touched on the subject with officers of the Guards, many of whom have been candid enough to admit the truth of all this; but they, naturally enough, added, that it was

not for them (pardon me for using a vulgar saying), *to cry stinking fish.*"

"Let me ask," inquired the General, "on what grounds the practice has been defended?"

"On no *tenable* ones," replied Bugle; "I have known it attempted on the score of *all* Armies having *privileged corps*, and that, as it has long existed in ours, it must necessarily be a proper, just, and wholesome measure; but I hold this to be the veriest twaddle ever uttered. Is it not a sufficient privilege that when a boy gets an Ensigncy in the Guards, he at once passes over the heads of all Ensigns, Cornets, and Second Lieutenants?—when he becomes a Lieutenant, that he has the *rank* of a Captain, and is eligible to exchange with any Captain of the Line?—that the moment he gets his company he passes over the heads of *all Majors of the Line and Cavalry* (many of whom have been in the Service long before he left school), and becomes a Lieutenant-Colonel? Is not all this enough, without General Officers of the Guards being thrust into the shoes of veteran Linesmen, and getting Colonelcies of Regiments of Infantry in their stead? Attempts have been made in the Senate-house to bolster up the thing, by extolling to the skies the gallant conduct and prominent services of the Guards in the field—a fact which no one who is acquainted with their history will deny; but whilst *their* exploits have been blazoned forth, why the tenfold greater ones of the *Line* have

been passed over in utter silence is an enigma which yet remains to be explained. Have they whose breasts are literally covered with stars, crosses, and medals, forgotten to what branch of the Service they are most especially indebted for them, and for the many good things they enjoy? If their memories are so very treacherous, the sooner they refresh them the better, by making themselves thoroughly acquainted with the part played by the *Line* in all the bloody battles of *their* day at least. A writer on the other side the Styx has truly said—'The pith and marrow of the British Service is the Line. To that Line is England indebted for all her Military glory; and it is that Line which she ought to foster and cherish as her sacred hope in the day of danger, whether at home or abroad.' In what manner it has been '*fostered and cherished*' has already been shown," said Bugle. "It has been suggested that a fair and just proportion of General Officers of the Guards should receive annually a sum fully equal to that accruing from a regiment, but that they should be considered no more entitled to Colonelcies of the Line than to Battalions of Artillery or Engineers; the justice of which proposal admits of no doubt."

"I entirely agree with you," said Demilune; "your patience, I fear, is exhausted; and I will therefore postpone some other questions which I am desirous of asking you and your friends."

CHAPTER VIII.

TRUE ENOUGH.

"WHAT say you, General, to a stroll with us as far as the ferry? We are certain to hear news from the opposite side; and I've a great notion that in our way there I can show you as queer a group as you ever placed eyes on."

"By all means, Captain Bugle," replied the Blenheim hero, "I shall be happy to accompany you and your three friends." "I can guess who you mean, Ned," said Evergreen,—"Affghans, Ghilzies, and Belloochies; and, if you look to the left, there they may be seen."

"They *are* a rum looking lot, indeed," said Demilune, "and I have heard so many vague and contradictory accounts of the conflict between them and our troops, that I am at a loss to know what to believe." "It was as deplorable a business altogether as any on record," continued Evergreen, "and had all the *causes* which led to it been closely investigated, and matters traced to the fountain-head, it would be

obvious that the saddle has not been put on the right horse. If an army experiences a reverse, you are well aware, General Demilune, that those with whom the highest responsibility rests are quite sure of being deeply and unsparingly censured, often by extremely incompetent judges, and in no very measured terms; —a truth which has been exemplified in the British Army in Europe, America, and Asia, within the last thirty years; and on one occasion neither the dead nor the living escaped. In the opinion of some, it was unwise to entrust so important a command as that of Affghanistan in the hands of Peninsular officers, who they considered were *passé* if not quite in their dotage. The gallant but unfortunate officer who held the chief command was erroneously supposed to have been one of them; but he never served an hour in the Peninsula; and the flattering encomiums passed on his brave and high-spirited Second-in-command (an old Peninsular soldier) by the members of the tribunal before which he appeared soon after the evacuation of Affghanistan, coupled with the exploits of Combermere and Reynell at Bhurtpoor; of Campbell in the Burmese war; of Keane and Cotton in the invasion of Affghanistan and the capture of Ghuznee; of Napier at Meeanee; and of Gough and Grey at Gwalior—all Peninsular men—must induce people of common understanding to *pause* ere they place implicit faith in such sweeping and wholesale charges against those who were trained in the most instructive field soldiers ever served in. 'Too many

cooks spoil the broth,' is a true proverb; and never was it more clearly exemplified than on that occasion. Good, nevertheless, often arises out of evil; and we may presume that the experience our army bought so dearly beyond the Indus has at length convinced those who have the direction of affairs in the East that there can be *but one head to an army*, and that he must be entirely uncontrolled by those about him, civil or military. I have frequently heard Havresack say, who was many years in India, and has had great experience likewise in European campaigns, that if an Indian army, consisting of 10,000 fighting men, could be persuaded to encumber itself with only the same quantity of baggage that a European army of 100,000 has in its train, an immense drag-chain would be taken from it, and its movements rendered much more easy and rapid."

"That's very true," replied Havresack; "but it would be as easy to turn the Ganges from its course as to get people in the East to adopt such a measure."

"Peter Counterscarp, of the old *Die-hards?*" exclaimed O'Houghlahan, on reaching the ferry at the moment when the boat was in the act of discharging her cargo.

"The very same," replied the new comer. "I often thought, Lucius, it would have been a dead heat between us; and I believe we should have crossed the Styx in the same boat, if you had given the cold-water-cure physician a wider berth."

"That 's a sore subject," said Lucius, "and I must entreat you never to mention it again. My friends —to whom I beg to introduce you—and myself, are desirous of knowing what is going on opposite; and when you have gratified us so far, I hope you will give me an account of your personal adventures since we parted company."

"The Factory Bill, Dan O'Connell, the Polka dance, the Ojibbeway Indians, the Corn-laws, and the new Governor-General of India, occupy public attention a good deal at present," said Counterscarp.

"What about the Corn-laws and the new Governor-General of India?" asked Demilune.

"Nothing new or extraordinary about the Corn-laws," replied Peter; "it 's pretty much the old story,—men driving their own wheelbarrows. The great landed proprietors vowing that cheap bread would bring inevitable ruin on the country; which means, in plain English, that their rents would be lowered, and some of their many luxuries curtailed—a doctrine that does not lack supporters amongst the squirets and the squirts—gradations of the genus squire. And as for the new Governor-General of India, many people think he played his old brother soldiers a very shabby trick on a recent occasion, when it was proposed that *they* should have *one* medal for their long and arduous services in the same fields, in the Peninsula, in which *he* gathered so many."

"I have heard much about the mode of giving medals in the British army," said Demilune, "and shall feel obliged to either of you who will do me the favour of explaining the thing."

"*How* these matters are managed," said Counterscarp, "it is easy to show: but it would puzzle the very devil himself to explain *why* it has been done in so unjust and disgusting a manner. You must know, General, that the victories gained by our army in the Peninsula, over the best troops in the world, were so brilliant, and followed in such rapid succession, and the hardships and privations to which the troops were constantly exposed of such a nature, that people at home began to think something more than mere *thanks* was due them; and at the termination of seven bloody campaigns, it was decided that medals should be distributed under the following regulations:—To every officer in command of a division, brigade, or regiment, to the Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, to their assistants—of which each division had a brace—and to certain aides-de-camp of the Commander-in-Chief, a medal was given for *every general action.* Regiments consisted of one Lieutenant-Colonel, two Majors, ten Captains, and thirty Subalterns; and as long as the Lieutenant-Colonel remained untouched by the bullets of the enemy and by fevers, agues, &c., not another individual in the regiment had any more chance of a medal than of a diadem. If the Lieutenant-Colonel happened to be

killed or disabled, the next in command received a medal, if a general action took place; but you must perceive clearly enough that the case was utterly hopeless with the great *mass* of officers of that army.

"The new Governor-General may have thought that those regulations gave satisfaction generally; and, if I mistake not, he expressed himself to that effect when he succeeded in strangling the appeal of his old comrades, and in depriving them of that which they ought to have received thirty years ago. He has given the undecorated survivors of that army to understand (numbers of whom have fought in as many fields as himself) that they have no claim to a medal!

"Be it so; but, in the name of justice, common sense, and good feeling, let him and all those whose breasts are covered with them lock them up and preserve them as heir-looms, but never again suspend them on their own persons, unless they can show that the undecorated veterans who toiled and fought through those campaigns do not deserve badges quite as much as themselves. Had it been the lot of the new Governor-General to be thrown more amongst *regimental* officers in those and in after days also, his notions as to the *general satisfaction* given by the regulations would be widely different from those he now professes to entertain. Thus much for *Peninsular* medals; and we have an additional proof that *ingratitude* is not confined to kings and peasants, but

is to be found in the intermediate grades likewise. The war in the Peninsula was scarcely concluded ere the battle of Waterloo was fought; and on that occasion people at the helm of affairs ran into the opposite extreme, by giving a medal to every individual of that army, combatants and non-combatants; Paymasters, Quartermasters, Surgeons, and Veterinary Surgeons. Medals have been awarded also, very lately, in a wholesale manner, for battles fought against hordes of undisciplined barbarians in China and India; and that the veterans of the Peninsular Army may have something on which to feast their eyes besides the decorations showered down so profusely on their brother soldiers in the East, they can scarcely turn the corner of a street in the British metropolis without running against men who have served in the ill-fated British Auxiliary Legion in Spain, on whose breasts medals and crosses are as thick as blackberries.

"Did no political party espouse the cause of the Peninsular soldiers on the recent occasion, when it was proposed to give them a medal?" inquired Demilune.

"To their utter disgrace, men of *all* parties, with a few honourable exceptions," said Counterscarp, "turned their backs on them; most of them leaving the House of Commons as soon as the question was brought before it—the Premier setting the example. And this, I should observe, was settled at their respective clubs some days before. *One*

of the parties, however, *did* act with *consistency*; for as, during the whole of the protracted struggle in the Peninsula, they never ceased to revile the army, and to foretell its ruin, defeat, and disgrace, support from *them* could not well be reckoned on; but words cannot express the indignation and contempt which honourable men must feel towards the *other* party, who in so heartless and cold-blooded a manner abandoned the cause of the survivors of an army, whose exploits they never ceased to laud to the skies at the time we were fighting for our existence as a nation. I passed years enough on the opposite side the Styx to be convinced that he who believes the honour, honesty, good faith, and good feeling of one political party superior to another labours under the greatest possible mistake. They all work with the same tools, when in power. The loaves and fishes for us and our friends; ships and regiments for our sons and nephews, claims or no claims;—this is the burthen of their song. I have now, General Demilune, explained to you how medals are distributed in the British Army."

CHAPTER IX.

CONTAINS A LITTLE FICTION AND MUCH TRUTH.

"You expressed a wish, O'Houghlahan," said Counterscarp, "to know something of my own history, and 'tis easily told. You recollect the terrible loss the old *Die-hards** sustained at Albuera, and how well they merited the flattering encomium passed on them by the Commander of that little army, who, in his despatches, said that 'they lay in ranks as they fell, every man wounded in front.'

"I suffered so severely from a wound received there as to be unable to rejoin my regiment for a length of time afterwards; and when I did so, was in such a rickety state that nothing but youth, and the excitement occasioned by being constantly confronted with such armies as the French had in Spain, enabled me to get through the many trying duties we were called on to perform. But I struggled on, and

* The 57th Regiment.

saw the glorious *finale* of that bloody and long-protracted contest; soon after which we embarked at Bordeaux for America. The vexation experienced by my old corps and many other Peninsular regiments, who did not return from America in time to take a part in the battle of Waterloo, was excessive; and it is needless to revert to our feelings of indignation on learning that no badge was to be given us for our Peninsular services, but that all hands of the Waterloo Army were to have a medal; many of whom never saw a musket discharged with ball-cartridge until that day.

"The *Die-hards* formed a part of the Army of Occupation in France, and the three years we spent there flew rapidly away; but my old wound perpetually tormented me, and I therefore seriously contemplated going on half-pay, or retiring altogether.

"Every doubt as to the course I should pursue was cut short, and my exit from the Service decided on sooner than, perhaps, it otherwise would have been, by the introduction of a system intended to complete the military education of a veteran army, which for so many years had been opposed to, and invariably victorious over, the finest troops in Europe." "May I ask," said Demilune, "what the system was to which you allude?"

"A rational one enough, in part," replied Counterscarp, "its object being to instruct officers of Infantry in the sword exercise; but it was prefaced

by such tedious, endless, tormenting, and—in the opinion of great numbers of old officers—useless twistings and screwings of arms, legs, and bodies into every conceivable shape and form, *before* swords were entrusted in our hands, that the old soldiers were thoroughly disgusted, and the young ones soon began to crack their jokes, and to ask if the battles in the Peninsula and those of Waterloo, Wagram, Jena, Austerlitz, &c., &c., were gained by it. Picture to yourself, General, a set of officers, numbers of whom were half worn-out and stiff with wounds and hard service, commencing at the eleventh hour the A, B, C of a system, the quintessence of which was to make them touch their toes with the tips of their fingers (a feat, by the bye, many of them never could accomplish), and, by various other contortions, to resemble eels undergoing the pleasant operation of being skinned alive, or opera-dancers preparing to exhibit in the Cachuca, Bolero, Fandango, or Polka dance!

"Out of all patience at being obliged, after so many years' service in different parts of the globe, to stick myself up amongst raw recruits, and to submit to the irritating process of twisting and bending, I retired from the army by the sale of my commission.

"Like many other old soldiers I became a wine-merchant; but that spec. proved a failure,—almost the only customers to my tap being some jovial souls of the *Die-hards*, the *Slashers*, the *Old Half-Hun-*

*dredth,** and others of the 2nd Division of the Peninsular Army, all of whom gave me a lift to the utmost of their power; and when I happened to have a few dozens of anything *particularly* choice in my cellar, they assembled by common consent at my domicile, and never quitted it whilst a single bottle remained. It is needless to say that total abstinence societies and teetotalism were not the fashion of the day.

"I converted into money the stock of wine remaining on hand, and having persuaded a very pretty and very ringleted young lady to become Mrs Counterscarp, who vowed she *doated* on everything military, and on veterans especially—we started on a colonising expedition to Australia. Soon after we had landed, I was strongly recommended to buy a large flock of sheep; and you can imagine my dismay at seeing wool fall 35 per cent. in price shortly after I had concluded what I fancied a capital purchase. There was, however, one shot still left in the locker; so, having sold my sheep at a great loss, and obtained a grant of land from Government for my long services, I commenced ploughing, harrowing, and sowing with great zeal, and with as little delay as possible; but knowing about as much of agricultural matters as the Pope and his Cardinals do of riding to hounds, I found myself again all abroad; and at the season when I ought to have been reaping

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* The 57th, 28th, and 50th Regiments.

and filling my granaries, I was sowing. Having profited by the dearly-bought experience of the first year, things went on so well for a length of time afterwards that we were in rather a flourishing state, and as happy and contented as mortals usually are on the opposite side of the Styx—although my wife *did* occasionally sigh for dear Ludgate hill, Cheapside, Holborn, and the Strand. Two young Counterscarps were in due time added to the establishment; the eldest of whom my wife insisted should be named Rowland Peter Aronches Almandrelejo Counterscarp, and the second, Lavinia Albuerinia Vittoriania Nivellia Counterscarp; but the small-pox suddenly put an end to my promising progeny and their fine names also. *

"Time had begun to alleviate our excessive grief; and, having realized some money, I intended to sell my property, and end my days in my native land. Nothing, however, is *certain* on the other side this river but death and taxation; and, instead of putting into execution the intention I had formed, I found myself paraded one morning at daybreak, in a large saw pit, with a brace of horse-pistols, against a huge overgrown Hibernian, whose conduct towards my wife had been of so atrocious a nature that nothing

* Several of the names given by Mrs Counterscarp to her children closely resemble those of towns or battle-fields in the Peninsula.

was left for it but to blow out his brains if I could possibly effect it.

"Our pistols exploded at the same instant—his ball entering my head, and mine his heart; we died like the Kilkenny cats. Old Charon ferried us over in the same boat, I sitting on the starboard and he on the larboard side; for such was still my detestation of him, that I got as far from him as possible. A General Officer crossed the ferry with us, whose history affords a striking example of the great injustice of a regulation which still exists in the British Army, but most assuredly in no other. The man, General Demilune, was half a century or more in the army, and his character was without speck or blemish; he served in the most deadly of our colonial stations, and in the European campaigns also, and was severely wounded. His *regimental* rank never having been higher than that of a *Captain*, he received only the *half-pay of that rank*, after he had become a General Officer; and with that most munificent stipend he lived and died!

"Is it possible to conceive anything more senseless, cruel, and unjust, than a regulation which has the effect of making a man actually poorer at the end of fifty years' service—and for no fault of his own—than he was the first day he joined as an Ensign, when he had the advantage of a barrack-room, a servant, coals, candles, and a regimental mess? This is

bad enough; but the worst part of it still is that the rod does not fall with equal force and severity on the backs of *all* General Officers so circumstanced. I remember a General Officer, whose *regimental* rank was never higher than that of *Captain*, becoming Commander-in-Chief of one of our most extensive and important colonial possessions during the war, and having a very considerable army under him, the emoluments arising from which and from the *Colonelcy of his regiment* must have rather *exceeded* the half-pay of a Captain.

"If the pages of a certain tell-tale Army List are carefully conned, instances enough will be found of General Officers having the Colonelcies of regiments, who scarcely ever commanded a *company*, and *never* did the duty of *regimental Field Officers*.

"Due reflection on the part of those who have the direction of such matters will, it is to be hoped, eventually cause so utterly indefensible a rule to be expunged; but if, on the other hand, it is to be continued, that it will be enforced on all men alike, who happen, unfortunately, to be so situated; and that the same description of sauce will be administered to the goose as to the gander."

CHAPTER X.

NAVAL AND MILITARY MEN WILL JUDGE HOW FAR THE STATEMENTS PUT FORTH IN THIS CHAPTER ARE CORRECT.

"'T IS strange, indeed, that such anomalies as those mentioned by you and your friends should still be permitted to exist," observed General Demilune, who had listened with great attention to Counterscarp's history, "and in an age when—if I am correctly informed by passengers who constantly arrive from the opposite bank—such rapid strides towards improvement are making in every direction. 'Faith, gentlemen, I begin to entertain strong doubts as to the wisdom, policy, and justice of *some* of the rules and regulations now in force for the management of the British Army, and I question much if you have not *retrograded* since the glorious days of Blenheim, instead of having *gone ahead*, as our transatlantic brethren so forcibly, and with such perfect elegance of phraseology, express it."

"It would be most unjust not to admit that great improvements have been effected, and some excellent regulations established, in the British Army of late years," replied Colonel Evergreen; "but many are still clung to with unpardonable obstinacy which never ought to have existed, and should be utterly exploded without ceremony or delay. But you may rely upon it that the pruning-knife will never be applied to the many unhealthy excrescences with which the tree abounds, nor will any changes be allowed to take place which have the least tendency to interfere with the *patronage* of those at the helm of affairs, or which, in short, do not suit their book to the fullest extent."

"I lately heard a discussion between Captain Bugle and yourself on General Brevets," said the Blenheim hero, "and shall feel much obliged by your explaining how the thing is arranged."

"There again," replied Evergreen, "the system is extremely faulty. General Brevets are, now-a-days, 'like angels' visits, few and far between;' and when one does take place, nothing is more common than to see officers of the *same rank*, but with many, many years' difference in the date of their commissions, promoted on the same day! For example: when men who have had the rank of Lieut.-Colonel for *two-and-twenty years* and others little more than *half* that time are made full Colonels in the same Brevet, the natural supposition is—either that the *latter* have

obtained their promotion much too soon, or the *former* much too late; and this is a fact which the wisest of philosophers would be sadly puzzled to disprove. Yet the system has long existed and still does exist; and not long before old Charon ferried me across the Styx, many of the oldest and most experienced officers in the army, who had seen much hard service, got the rank of Colonels on the same day with men who were scarcely born when many of the former were actively employed in different parts of the globe in the longest and most sanguinary war ever waged by England. The same thing, of course, takes place amongst Majors and Captains, and when I was a sojourner on the opposite bank of this stream, I suggested what I then conceived, and still do conceive, would remedy to a certain extent this very defective system. My proposals, however, met with the same fate that proposals almost invariably experience which emanate from individuals possessing no interest, or unconnected with those in power."*

* As the author was in the act of looking over these *Rambles*, previously to their being put into the form of the pamphlet which he now submits to the public eye, a Brevet (dated the 10th November, 1846) made its appearance; and as the correctness of the opinion he has given in this chapter, and frequently elsewhere also, as to the great inconsistency, imperfection, and injustice of the *mode* of giving General Brevets, is thereby fully proved, he would call the attention of his readers (should he be fortunate enough to have any) to the following fact:—

The Lieutenant-Colonels who got that rank in 1815, for hav-

"Let us hear your plan, Colonel," said Demilune, "so that we may judge of its feasibility."

"It 's a simple one enough," continued Evergreen, "and here it is:—Let us suppose that a General

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ing commanded regiments or for having filled certain Staff situations at Waterloo (and even the Lieutenant-Colonels of a part of the year 1814) did not become full Colonels until 1837, having thus held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel *twenty-two and twenty-three years;* whereas, in the late Brevet, the Lieutenant-Colonels of 1836 became Colonels in 1846, having consequently been only *ten years* Lieutenant-Colonels. The author of these *Rambles* is quite sincere in congratulating the Lieutenant-Colonels of 1836 on their promotion; nor does he think they got it one hour too soon. But he would ask your "let-well-alone" people, and all who are blindly bigoted to old customs, whether the Lieutenant-Colonels of 1814 and 1815 obtained the rank of Colonel *thirteen years too late*, or whether the Lieutenant-Colonels of 1836 got *their* promotion *thirteen years too soon;* for that one or the other must have been the case is indisputable; nor can any quirk, quibble, or subterfuge get rid of the glaring fact. A *small annual Brevet*, instead of a large one at the end of every five years, is the best remedy he can devise; and he has endeavoured to explain his views in this chapter. In suggesting this and other changes in our military system, the author has occasionally been told by men who are ready at all times to defend old rules, however faulty they may be, "that it has always been the custom of the Service,—that it would be dangerous to make the slightest change,—that we ought to let well alone,"—and other twaddle of the kind. To such wretched attempts to bolster up bad customs, the author might with great justice reply that it was at one time the fashion for Protestants and Roman Catholics to make bonfires of each other,—that it was legal and customary, not many years since, for Englishmen to freight English ships with cargoes of human flesh, and to sell them at the hammer like sheep or bullocks—an iniquitous and revolting process which the author has too often witnessed ever to forget,—that, until the charter of the East India Company expired, it was the custom to *oblige* the inhabitants of Great Britain, consisting of some fifteen or twenty millions of people, to buy tea at an enormous price, for the

Brevet comes out once in every five years, and the expense of it is so and so (I really have not the least idea of what the amount might be)—but instead of its taking place once in five years, why not give a

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sake of giving a monopoly to and enriching some few nobs in Leadenhall street,—that, in the early part of the present century, it was the custom to plaster the head of every British soldier with hog's-lard, and then to lay on it as much wheaten flour as would make a good-sized pudding; and, by way of adding to his comfort and to the convenience of his costume, he wore *extremely tight, short inexpressibles*, made of white cloth, and long black gaiters which reached to the knee, and were so thickly studded with gilt buttons that between greasing, powdering, and buttoning, more than half his time was spent. Yet those and a multiplicity of other follies, horrors, abominations, and monstrosities (perfect, wise, just, and humane as they were, without doubt, considered when in full operation). have been abolished; and the defenders of the present General Brevet plan, and of various other anomalies and abuses, may rest assured that the time must come when a reform will take place in them, as has already been the case in various other matters. It will be thought, perhaps, by some (for there *are* persons always ready to put the most erroneous constructions on everything), that in expressing an opinion freely on this and on many other military questions, the author has been actuated by *self-interested motives*; but he assures them it is far from being the case. He has nothing to complain of on the score of his own promotion, it having been *more* rapid than that of many, and *less* so than that of many; and whether General Brevets are given once a month or once in every five years, to *him* it can matter nothing. Having served a great number of years in the longest and most bloody war ever waged by England, and it having been his lot to participate in every one of the European campaigns of the Great Captain, and having, moreover, been located, previously to that eventful era, in the region of land-crabs, scorpions, centipedes, and various other blessings of the kind with which the torrid zone abounds; daily and hourly witnessing the direful effects of yellow fever in every form, and in a more sweeping, wholesale manner than most men have; it occurred to him that superintending in future the inspection of arms, am-

small Brevet annually, and limit the expense attending it to *one-fifth* part of what would be incurred by a large one at the end of five years? On the score of equity it is difficult to understand how this proposal can be objected to; and even if it were attended with a trifling additional expense—which I am not quite sure would be the case—a country which lavishes tens of thousands annually on sinecurists and drones—many of whom have done little else throughout life but eat, drink, and sleep, ought not to hesitate for an instant in putting some such regulation in force, and thus giving a *certain* prospect of promotion—late in the day though it be—to old and meritorious naval and military veterans, whose lives have been spent in the service of their country, and who are advancing with rapid strides towards the ferry oppo-

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munition, knapsacks, button-brushes, defaulters' books, &c., &c., and attending guard-mountings daily, in home or foreign garrisons, would be dull work (in the performance of which no excitement is to be found, nor is one atom of the really important part of a soldier's duties to be learned), and he therefore made his bow and retired at the end of three long apprenticeships. He cannot, however, help remarking that, had he stuck to the harness, the Brevet of November, 1846, would have made him a Major-General; and in the same *Gazette*, men appeared as Major-Generals, who were at school *many years after he got his company*; and, moreover, *Ensigns* of the year in which he got the rank of *Lieutenant-Colonel*, appeared as Major-Generals in the same *Gazette!* If there is not something extremely bad and rotten in the present system of giving General Brevets, the devil's in it. But it is the *system*, and the *system alone*, that is to be condemned; no kind of blame can, or ought to, attach to those who are so fortunate as to benefit by it.

site, where Charon is ever anxiously on the look-out for passengers. Were this plan adopted, a few of the seniors of different ranks in the navy and army would be able to console themselves with knowing to a certainty that on the first day of the ensuing year they would obtain promotion, and those who might be disposed to object to such a measure under the plea of economy would derive much consolation from the positive assurance that grim Death is always busy with old Admirals and Generals, and that vacancies are almost daily occurring. Another of my suggestions was that, when a vacancy occurred by the death of an Admiral, the senior Post Captain on the list should instantly get his flag, the senior Commander be posted, and the senior Lieutenant be made a Commander, provided that neither of the seniors were on the *retired list*, and that their characters were irreproachable. In like manner, when a General Officer died, that the senior Colonel in the army should become a General, the senior Lieutenant-Colonel a Colonel, the senior Major a Lieutenant-Colonel, the senior Captain a Major, and the senior Lieutenant get his company; and if the senior Lieutenant in the army happened to belong to either of the Ordnance Corps, instead of to the Cavalry or Infantry of the Line, that he should get the brevet rank of Captain. Should it be considered too great a boon, then let such promotion as I have suggested be given on the death of *two* Admirals or Generals; and if even

that be thought too great an indulgence, let *one* of each rank be promoted on the death of *three* Admirals or Generals. The total stagnation which now exists would by those means be in part prevented, and a distant gleam of hope imparted to men who have long sighed in vain for promotion, and who cannot, in the common course of nature, long enjoy it."

"That's all mighty pretty, very true, and perfectly just, my good fellow," observed O'Houghlahan; "but if things are not much changed since I left the opposite bank of the Styx, your plan has as much chance of being put in force as we have of persuading the old ferryman to recross the river with us, and to allow us to lounge for a few hours in the United Service Club. No, no, Jack Evergreen; don't you see how your plan would interfere with the patronage of the *powers that be*, and with that of the Naval Department especially? Can you believe that they would consent to promote in that manner old Commanders and Lieutenants, be their merits and services ever so great, unless they possessed high interest?"

"I fear not," replied Evergreen, "yet pointing out practicable plans can do no harm, although mine, when I left the opposite bank of the Styx, had not done the slightest good. If objections were made to my *first* proposal, and my *second* one adopted, a sufficient promotion for all ranks in the two Services would not thus be given; and I therefore proposed to remedy it by giving a General Brevet more fre-

quently than has been the case of late years, and thus making up the deficiency."

"Upon my word, Colonel," said General Demilune, "I can see nothing in your plans which is not extremely reasonable and just; and, if I had not engaged to meet an old Minden officer, Captain Blaze-away, at yonder bend in the river, I should take the liberty of troubling you with some other questions, which I will postpone until we next meet."

CHAPTER XI.

EVERGREEN'S STORY IS QUITE TRUE; AND THE TALKATIVE, JAWING, BOASTING, TROUBLESOME CHARACTER DESCRIBED IN THE LATTER PART OF THIS CHAPTER IS NOT A FICTITIOUS ONE.

"An old chum of mine—Jasper Vanguard—has just arrived from the opposite bank, and without doubt brings some news, which we may as well extract from him at once; but before we do so, I vote we get hold of General Demilune, who will be disappointed if we listen to the contents of Vanguard's budget without his being present."

To this proposal of Evergreen's all his friends assented, and off they went in search of the General and the new comer.

"By the bye, Evergreen," said Bugle, as they sauntered along, "did not Vanguard once belong to your old corps, and was he not one of the many singular characters it at that time contained? Do tell us that queer story which caused much merriment

at the time; something about Vanguard's horse." —"As I was the principal performer in that comedy," replied Evergreen, "no one can give you so true and faithful an account of it as myself.

"As we were getting under arms, as usual, an hour before daylight, a few days after the army had commenced its retrograde movement from Busaco towards the lines of Torres Vedras, and whilst I was in the act of crawling out from under my dew-bespangled cloak, at the foot of an ilex, it occurred to me that I might as well employ a part of the next tedious hour in metamorphosing Vanguard's horse, which was the veriest garron ever foaled, both as to shape and action. He had none of the qualities a horse *ought* to have, but every one that he ought *not*. His head was large, thick, and fleshy, with a Roman nose; his eyes leaden and lifeless; his neck very short, and put on the wrong side uppermost; his body particularly short; his legs long; his shoulders short, thick, and upright; his feet much contracted, his pasterns stilty to a degree; his loins narrow; he had a bad chronic cough, splents, spavins, and carbs without end; and, to complete the picture, scarcely two inches of his *dock* remained; down over which, however, the hair grew tolerably long, and, to a certain extent, concealed the deformity. Having got my company under arms, and ascertained that every man was present, I lit the end of a candle at one of the bivouac fires, got a large pair of scissors from a

tailor belonging to my company, and taking with me a man I always employed in shooting, coursing, and fishing excursions, and in furthering, also, every kind of devilry that might be brewing, I stole away to a tree where Vanguard's horse, and several other miserable animals were picketed, and regaling themselves on a scanty meal of chopped straw. In a few minutes I cut off, as close as possible, every hair from his tail, leaving barely two inches of naked dock; after which I returned to my company and waited for the appearance of the first rays of light in the east. Day came at last, and with it an order to prosecute our march; and on Vanguard—who at that time was acting as Adjutant—roaring out for his horse, no words can express his astonishment at witnessing the magical change effected on him during the night; and still more hopeless an undertaking would it be to describe the excessive indignation and horror depicted on the countenance of his bâtman, who led him, most reluctantly, to the head of the column, amidst roars of laughter from officers, non-commissioned officers, privates, and bugle-boys. Most men would have been confoundedly annoyed at all this; but Vanguard loved fun in every shape, and so far from being angry, he thought it a capital joke, and enjoyed it exceedingly.

"We were halted after a march of some miles; and on again getting under arms, the division was formed in contiguous close columns of battalions, and

the Staff Officers and Adjutants called to the front to receive instructions from the General, who happened at that moment to be near the extreme left. Vanguard, whose battalion was on the right, was consequently obliged to ride along the front of the whole division; and, could you have seen the figure his charger made as he vainly endeavoured to knock off, with his hairless dock, the myriads of flies which had collected with impunity on his rump and hind quarters, you would not have been surprised at a crack division of Wellington's army being so convulsed with laughter as to be unable for some minutes either to speak or perform the most simple evolution.

"'By —— this is too ridiculous,' said the General to the Commandant of our battalion, and laughing immoderately when he saw the *cause* of all the merriment amongst us; 'pray, Colonel, let your Adjutant get another horse, for it is morally impossible that the officers and soldiers of this division can be steady in the ranks, or refrain from laughter, if that ill-conditioned, ugly, deformed, misshapen quadruped is constantly paraded in their presence.'

"I'll soon get him another charger, thought I; and the next night, accompanied by my faithful assistant, I contrived to splice to his dock an immensely long tail, cut from some unfortunate baggage animal that had died near our bivouac; and the next morning, neither Vanguard nor his trusty bâtman recognised their own horse. By this time we were approaching

the far-famed lines of Torres Vedras, where matters of another description claimed our attention, and I don't recollect what was the fate of Jasper's nag; but I strongly suspect he died, with myriads of others, from want of food."

He had scarcely concluded his story ere they stumbled on Demilune, and soon afterwards on Vanguard, to whom Evergreen introduced the whole party, and then thus addressed him:—

"'T is hardly fair, my dear Jasper, to welcome you amongst us, when many on the opposite bank of the Styx are, perhaps, lamenting your departure; but pass this stream all men must; and before you give us the latest news from the other side, let us know what caused your being put in charge of the old ferryman."

"Heartily tired of colonial and garrison duties," said Vanguard, "and of the humdrum, monotonous work of eternal guard-mountings, pipe-clay, and so forth, I retired on half-pay, took a lodging in Jermyn street, made the Club my head-quarters for twelve months of the year, and there I might still have been but for an occurrence which took place a few days since. My table was placed one evening so near that at which several military men were dining that I could not avoid hearing their conversation. The principal spokesman of the party—who, by the bye, did not allow any one to get in a word edgeways—was holding forth in a noisy, blustering, dictatorial manner,

on different military subjects, not one of which he understood in the slightest degree. He kindly condescended to enlighten his companions by criticising the acts and deeds of those who had commanded armies for the last half-century; most of whom he designated *pig-headed* or *big-headed*—a term he was in the habit of applying indiscriminately to all men whose opinions differed from his own sapient ones. This was farcical enough, and rather amusing; but when I heard him declare that the old war officers were slow coaches, and old fellows who knew nothing of the system of the present day, I could not refrain from telling him that his impudence was only equalled by his extreme ignorance of the subjects he had been discussing.

"Your blustering, noisy, talkative bully is, ninety-nine times in a hundred, if regularly *collared*, too glad to back out of any scrape his tongue may have led him into, and the one in question evinced strong symptoms of the sort. The wine had circulated freely; and those about him keeping him up to the mark, we met the following morning and exchanged shots: his penetrated my head and mine took effect in his body. Whether he has or has not yet crossed the Styx, I don't know; but old Charon would confer a great blessing on us Stygians by pitching him overboard when he gets him half-way across; for such a character is unworthy of a berth on either bank."

"Do you know anything of his history?" said Evergreen.

"Yes," replied Vanguard, "he is heir to a considerable landed estate, on the strength of which he has, I understand, ridden the high horse with those who have been idiots enough to allow it, and made himself universally obnoxious. His services have been great, embracing England, Ireland, Scotland, and the Mediterranean; so that his possessing such extensive information on all professional subjects, and more especially on those relative to the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns, cannot be wondered at, although he had scarcely finished eating pap when they were going on.

"A short time before my departure from the other side, we had visits from Kings and Emperors; and some sensation has been created by a pamphlet recently published by a young French Prince, who intimates, in pretty direct terms, that he and his countrymen will ere long pay us a visit in a fleet of steamers, and convince us that we are no longer Masters of the Ocean. There is a good deal of balderdash in this Royal production; yet there are certain passages in it not unworthy of our attention; and as we never ought to be too proud to profit by hints from our adversaries, much good *may*, and I

hope *will*, result from its publication. Had I not been sent across the Styx so suddenly, it was my intention to have offered some suggestions on the subject; and I will ere long give you the substance of them."

CHAPTER XII.

THE AUTHOR CONSCIENTIOUSLY BELIEVES THAT THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS WOULD BE VERY BENEFICIAL TO THE COUNTRY IF THEY WERE ADOPTED.

"On this bank of the Styx," continued Vanguard, "without any apprehension of stirring up a hornet's nest about my ears, or of drawing on me a hot fire from those whose influence with men in power is too great to be successfully resisted, I can explain what I conceive the best mode of turning to account the money voted annually for our Militia and Yeomanry force. It is an old story, but a very true one, that by the introduction of steam the system of maritime warfare will be materially changed in future; and of this a sprig of French Royalty was so obliging as to remind us, a short time before I crossed this river. His Royal Highness has, methinks, reckoned many of his chickens before they are hatched; and he may find it much easier to hold out threats than to carry them into execution. Yet, by means of steam-ves-

sels, his countrymen will be able occasionally to play the Buccaneer; to steal out of Boulogne and other ports in the Channel, like thieves in the dark, and, if fortunate enough in their passage across not to meet with British cruisers, they may land, plunder, and burn a town, and, recrossing the Channel in all haste, seek refuge under the guns of their batteries.

"They will probably also attempt invasion on a larger scale; and it behoves us, therefore, to prepare for them a courteous and fitting reception, in the event of their escaping the vigilance of our gallant tars, and effecting a landing on our shores.

"The greater part of the regular force is scattered over the globe in our widely-spread colonial possessions, in foreign garrisons, and in Ireland; and the small remnant not so employed barely suffices to perform the duties of the Metropolis, Windsor, the arsenals, the manufacturing districts, the Channel Islands, &c.; and in the event of a sudden outbreak of war, strong reinforcements must be sent without delay from this force to the West Indies and various other places, and our shores left in an extremely defenceless state. It is true that when I lately stepped into Charon's boat and took my departure from the opposite bank, more regiments were in England than had been stationed there for some time; but as many of those in India were soon to be relieved, after a banishment of upwards of twenty years, some skeletons only of corps would replace those sent out.

"If taken at a ground hop—and nothing appears more probable—is it not well worth considering if those who may venture across the Channel on an invading excursion can be repelled by the few hundreds of the Coast Blockade men scattered along from Scarborough Head to Penzance; by the Adjutants and three or four Serjeants of each of the Militia Depôts; by the Yeomanry Cavalry of the maritime counties; by the handful of regular troops that could be despatched to the coast from the metropolis and the manufacturing districts, and by calling together hastily some hundreds of superannuated pensioners? If there *are* other resources, I have been long at a loss to guess what they are, unless implicit reliance is placed on the Militia; which, although it may make a good appearance on paper, contains thousands who scarcely know the butt of a musket from the muzzle, or how to load and fire it; and as little of the rudiments of drill as New Zealanders. This, nevertheless, is a force which ought to be kept in such a state, that a large, well-organized, well-equipped, and well-armed body of men could be assembled, in case of necessity, at a short notice. In these cheese-paring and somewhat precarious times, it may fairly and reasonably be asked, by what means the *irregulars*—a term applied to all troops not belonging to the regular force—can be rendered most useful to their country. It might safely be left to the consideration of a Board, consisting of men to-

tally uninfluenced by, and unconnected with, persons at the head of Militia and Yeomanry corps, but having the good of their country at heart, whether a Yeomanry force, called out one week in the year for training, can possibly be so efficient, or capable of rendering such essential service to the country, as *Militia Depôts* would be, if established on a widely different plan from that at present pursued. Their numerical strength should depend on the amount of population of their respective counties; and the depôts of many of the *maritime ones*—Essex, Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire especially—ought to be considerably the strongest, those counties being the most liable to invasion. One month in the year the Militia ought to be called together for training; and when assembled, I believe there would be but little difficulty in establishing those Depôts, by offering to pay and clothe in the same manner as soldiers of the Line a certain number of privates of each corps for *fifteen months.* They should not be liable to serve out of their respective counties, unless war broke out, or any serious commotion occurred in an adjoining one; but escorting deserters, or military prisoners of any kind, through their own counties to the nearest military station in that adjoining, should be considered a part of their duty. Those Depôts should be stationed in a central part of every county; and they would then be able to move in any direction, in aid of the civil power, either by railroads or (as I

have often known troops transported in cases of emergency) in light carts, spring-waggons, or carriages; or, if time did not press, they could be *marched* to the point where their services were required. At every annual assemblage of the Militia, the men should be given to understand that in three months more the period would expire for those who had volunteered in the preceding year, and that any men disposed to do so for the next fifteen months should give in their names. At the expiration of their fifteen months of voluntary service, these men would still be borne on the strength of their regiments, and attend the annual trainings. This plan would be worth a fair trial; and if it succeeded—as I firmly believe it would—a formidable nucleus, possessing a good deal of useful military knowledge, would be ready at all times in every county, upon which the more imperfectly trained portion of each corps could be formed in one-tenth part the time it would take to do so as our Depôts are now established.

"The money voted for the Yeomanry for the year I crossed the Styx amounted to nearly 90,000*l.*, and for that which preceded it, to considerably more than 100,000*l.*; thus averaging about 100,000*l.* per annum. This sum would pay, at the rate of 1*s.* 1*d.* to each man per diem, more than 5,000 privates of Militia, who might be induced to volunteer to serve for fif-

teen months in the manner I have suggested. *Clothing* them, also, could not be thus defrayed; but those penny-wise and pound-foolish politicians who might oppose the measure on the score of that trifling additional expense, would do well to study attentively the pages of the Pension List; in which they would find large sums annually expended in a much less worthy and less useful manner.

"Of two evils the lesser should always be chosen; and on that principle it would be better policy to *diminish very materially the Yeomanry force,* or to do away with it altogether, and to establish, instead, well-organized Depôts for every Militia corps. I have a high respect for the Yeomanry; I know that they have on many occasions done good service to the country, and I think they ought to be kept up on a liberal and proper footing; yet the simple question is this:—As they who hold the strings of the public purse do not grant a sum sufficiently large for both Yeomanry and Militia, and as it is of vital importance to have a properly-organized nucleus, upon which a large Militia force might speedily be put into a formidable state, *which of the two should be first provided for?*"

"You are right, Vanguard," said Evergreen; but any one who ventured to propose a measure of the kind, on the opposite side of the Styx, would be assailed by nobs in command of Yeomanry corps, by

Militia officers of the old school (and the new school, too, perhaps), and by men in Parliament and out of Parliament, who would see in these Depôts, *not* the elements for *repelling* invasion, but the first symptoms of a standing army, about to be established for the purpose of invading their liberties and rights. It would be combated also on the score of additional expense, and on the plea that Yeomanry Cavalry are of great utility in suppressing civil commotions. Now, although a few troops of mounted soldiers—regular or irregular—from their *imposing appearance,* strike greater terror into an undisciplined rabble than an equal number of Infantry soldiers, a musketry fire, if unfortunately obliged to be resorted to, would soon undeceive a misguided mob, and convince them which of the two is most to be dreaded. Those Militia Depôts, therefore, could be used with great effect on such occasions, and be transported to the point at which they might be required, in the manner you have already stated; and if distant from railroads, or if difficulties arose about procuring transport for them in light waggons, carts, or other vehicles, those amongst us who participated in the celebrated march of Crawford's Light Brigade in Spain, which traversed sixty-two miles of country in twenty-six hours, in the hottest month of the year, and in the hottest part of Europe, every man carrying sixty pounds weight, know full well with what rapidity *Infantry* can march, if properly accustomed to it; and I don't

see, Vanguard, why Depôts of Militia could not, after being embodied for a time, perform marches sufficiently long and rapid for any purpose likely to be required."

"Undoubtedly they could," replied Vanguard, "and I always had that in view. The Adjutants and Serjeants of the present Militia Establishment, with the addition of a few intelligent and well-conducted men promoted to the rank of corporals, would suffice for the organization of most of the Depôts; but to those belonging to certain maritime counties a Subaltern and a few more Serjeants should be added.

"The plan of inducing a certain number of men to serve for fifteen months at the Depôts, and at the expiration of that time discharging them and getting a fresh lot, would probably be objected to, because war *might* break out *immediately after* those volunteers had been discharged and their places been filled by men who knew nothing of their business.

"But it should be considered that, however suddenly our country may be involved in war, we should pretty soon be on the *qui vive*, and that a short time would be sufficient to call together the Militia; amongst whom many would be found who had already served their fifteen months at the Depôts, and would, consequently, be able to aid very materially in instructing the men thus suddenly collected.

"This, my friends, is the outline of my plan;

and as the sneers and sarcasms of those who would strenuously oppose such a measure if brought forward on the *opposite* side the Styx cannot reach me on *this*, I give it you without reserve; and, should it hereafter be adopted, my firm belief is—*so much the better.*"

CHAPTER XIII.

PROFESSIONAL MEN MUST DECIDE ON THE MERITS OR DEMERITS OF THE PROPOSALS HEREIN CONTAINED.

"YOUR views as to the Militia and Yeomanry are quite in accordance with my own," said Havresack to Vanguard, but you are not aware, perhaps, that *not a man has been balloted for during the last* 12 *or* 13 *years;* and, consequently, there is not a single Militiaman, *even on paper,* except the Commandants, the Adjutants, and a few Serjeants!

"Verily, this is a pretty state of things; and as the present Administration and that which preceded it are both equally culpable, the chances are, that if the subject is brought before Parliament, many men of both parties will endeavour to smother it, and contrive to make their escape from the House as they did on a recent occasion, when an honourable and gallant member proposed that 'justice, even at the eleventh hour, should be done to the survivors of the Peninsular Army, and medals given them.'"

"Ay, that was a most disgraceful proceeding," exclaimed Bugle, "and little creditable to those Senators who, following the example of the leader of one of the parties, cut and ran, and declined to face the question manfully."

"The neglected state of the Militia force many will, probably, live to see and repent the effects of; and as, in the event of a sudden outbreak of war, much cannot possibly be expected from it (as at present constituted) for some time after it has been called out, it may not be amiss to consider how far the defences, which were constructed on various parts of the coast of England during the threatened invasion under Napoleon, may be rendered useful, should we be again so menaced."

"Excuse me for interrupting you," said the Blenheim hero, "but let me ask your friend Vanguard, who is so lately from the opposite bank of the Styx, if any steps have been taken to form harbours of refuge, of which I have heard a good deal lately from various passengers?"

"You must be aware, General Demilune," replied Vanguard, "that the final arrangement of matters of the highest importance to the State is frequently postponed from year to year, session after session, in a most unaccountable manner. The question respecting harbours of refuge has for a considerable time been mooted in Parliament, and the absolute neces-

sity for establishing them very generally admitted; and I believe a committee has been appointed for the purpose of surveying the coast; but I am not aware that any steps have yet been taken to construct them, or that anything has been definitely settled."

"I was," observed Colonel Evergreen, "in the first encampment which was formed under Sir John Moore's command, on the heights overlooking Sandgate, in Kent, immediately opposite Boulogne; in and near which Napoleon's army and flotilla were congregated, and frightened half the people of England out of their wits. Boulogne was so closely blockaded by Nelson, that scarcely a vessel of any description ventured far from the protection of its land batteries. I have, however, occasionally seen our blockading squadron driven by heavy gales from its important station, and obliged to seek temporary refuge by running to the eastward or westward, as the case might be; thus unavoidably leaving nothing between Moore's brigade, and 150,000 French troops, with their flotilla, but twenty miles of salt water. Since that time more than forty years have elapsed; but the experience then gained has, it appears, gone for little or nothing. The powers of steam have been so clearly developed, that the most sceptical of human beings must be convinced that our shores are now much more vulnerable than they then were; that our merchant ships in the channel will be in far greater

danger of being captured by privateers, and that, consequently, harbours of refuge along various parts of the coast are indispensably necessary.

"Without professing to have known much either of witchcraft or of nautical matters whilst I was a sojourner on the other side of the Styx, I have, nevertheless, been long convinced that *Dover* is, of all places, the most desirable for a harbour of refuge; and if money and manual labour *can* effect it, nothing ought to be considered too high a price for its accomplishment. Folkstone is also an extremely eligible situation; but how far either it or Dover can be made available for the purpose, I don't pretend to say.

"By means of men-of-war steamers stationed at those points we could always watch Boulogne closely; a port on which we ought to keep an exceedingly jealous eye in case of war. At that narrow part of the Channel our merchant vessels and coasters would be constantly in danger of capture by privateers running out from the opposite French ports; and harbours of refuge at Dover or Folkstone, or at both, would tend greatly to their protection. We should, moreover, be enabled to do that which we *could not do* when threatened by Napoleon with invasion, viz., in all weathers and in all seasons to have a naval force immediately opposite Boulogne and Calais, ready to sally forth and attack any vessels which might venture out.

"It has been in contemplation, I believe, to form a harbour of refuge on a grand scale at the Downs; but not being sufficiently versed in the mysteries of engineering, I cannot guess in what manner it is to be accomplished. Floating batteries, constructed on the same principle as those which I remember to have seen at Copenhagen, must, I presume, constitute a part of the plan; added to which a breakwater of some kind or other, under shelter of which our ships will be able to ride with much greater safety than they can at present. It is to be hoped, however, that harbours of this description will be completed at various points without any unnecessary delay; and in the interim I should recommend our friends on the other side of the Styx to consider by what means the Martello towers and other works on the southern coast can be rendered available in the event of a war.

"It was the fashion some years ago to ridicule the chain of Martello towers extending from Sandgate along the beach to Rye in Sussex, and in like manner the canal which runs along the same line over Romney Marsh; *commencing* near Sandgate and *terminating* near Rye; as neither one nor the other (it was asserted) were capable of offering anything like a serious impediment to an invading force. By whom those towers and the canal were first projected I have not the most distant idea; but as Sir John Moore commanded on the spot, the natural inference

is that he was consulted, and that his assent was given before a spade was put into the ground or a single brick laid; and had *he* disapproved of them, it is not likely that the authorities would have flown in the face of a General of such acknowledged talents and great experience.

"Whether they were constructed with or without the concurrence of that gallant soldier, or whether the money expended on them might not have been more advantageously laid out in other modes of defence for that part of the coast, I know not; but there they still stand, and it would not be difficult to prove that both the towers and the canal *would* be impediments to troops disembarking between Sandgate and Rye. Sandgate is nearly opposite Boulogne; and the beach from thence to Dungeness, and on to Rye, presents little difficulty for the landing of troops at any part of that extensive line of more than twenty miles.

"It may be presumed that an invading force issuing from Boulogne would be aware of the policy of steering direct for the *nearest spot* where a landing could be effected. Where, then, would the passage across be so short as from Boulogne to Sandgate? and where could so favourable an extent of sea-beach be found?

"It requires no trifling scope of ground on which to disembark *simultaneously* four or five thousand men;

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and when that number is multiplied twentyfold—which we may conclude would be the case, if we happened to be favoured with a visitation of the kind—much elbow-room would be necessary, and our invaders be obliged to extend far to the westward of Sandgate, if they hoped to throw ashore a large force as nearly as possible all at the same time.

"Under such circumstances, the effects likely to be produced by the canal and by the men stationed in the towers would be these: the enemy would be obliged to land under a fire of musketry delivered from behind the parapets and through the loopholes of the towers, and at the same time a heavy piece of ordnance, mounted on a traverse on the top of each tower, would pour grape on the boats as they neared the shore, and on the men as they landed and attempted to form.

"Put into each tower a proper number of men, plenty of water, provisions, fuel, and ammunition; let the ladder be pulled up and placed inside and the aperture fastened, and how are the inmates to be got at? A choice of two evils would remain for the invaders; either to attempt the immediate reduction of the towers by escalade,—to effect which countless numbers of ladders of great height must be brought with them from their own country and dragged through the surf to the beach,—or, to push on at once past the towers towards the interior of the country.

"The success of the first of those two measures would be exceedingly doubtful, and one very unlikely to be attempted; and if the second were adopted, as in all probability would be the case, every man and horse, every piece of artillery, the ammunition, and the whole *matériel* of their army would be obliged not only to *land* under a continual fire, but they would be exposed to it long after they had passed between this chain of forts, and commenced their movement towards the interior. They would also be under the necessity of leaving behind them a hostile force, a portion of which might sally from their strong-holds, harass their rear, and interrupt the communication with their ships.

"The dreadful slaughter of our brave troops at Buenos Ayres by the fire of an undisciplined rabble, from windows and the tops of flat-roofed houses strongly barricaded, and the obstinate defence of their fortresses, made on various occasions by Spaniards untrained to war, against Napoleon's veterans, are sufficient proofs that raw levies, fighting behind parapets, may often contend successfully with the bravest and most experienced soldiers.

"Into those towers—in the event of war suddenly breaking out—we might station our raw levies, who, if they had plenty of ammunition and good muskets, would be formidable opponents; and it would enable us to hold the better disciplined bodies in hand, ready

to move to any point menaced, and to encounter the invaders in the open field.*

"Let us now see how the canal would affect an invading force.

"At certain points, if I recollect rightly, it is near enough to the towers to be commanded by the guns which would be mounted on the summit of each; men, horses, guns, ammunition, &c., &c. would all have to cross the canal before they could make further progress; and it is clear that on reaching its banks they would (to use a nautical phrase) be BROUGHT UP and obliged to establish bridges of some kind before they could cross. The passage would not be the work of a few hours, but a long and troublesome affair, which the fire of the cannon from the towers would not tend to facilitate. The obstacles presented by the towers and canal would give us much precious time; for, by means of telegraphs by day and beacon-fires at night, the intelligence of a landing would be communicated in a very short space of time in all directions, and *every minute* lost by the invaders in passing the canal, we should employ advantageously by despatching troops as expeditiously as possible towards the point menaced.

* A long time after this chapter was written, an order was issued by the military authorities to repair these sewers and to put them in a proper state of defence; and this fully bears me out in the opinion I have long held respecting them.

"That this part of the coast was considered particularly likely to be invaded, may be conjectured from the following facts:—England's favourite General, Sir J. Moore, was stationed there with a chosen body of troops; and encamped in second line, a short distance from him, was a strong Militia force.

"Immense sums were expended in the construction of the Martello towers, the canal, and some redoubts near Dimchurch, on Romney Marsh; barracks were erected at Shorncliffe, Hythe, Brabourn Lees, Ashford, Riding street, Ospringe, Feversham, Canterbury, Dover, &c., and Cavalry were posted along the coast from Hythe to Romney, Lydd, &c., &c. An army venturing to invade England would find their graves or their prisons; for our countrymen would rise against them as one man, and all chance of *a retreat* to their own country would be hopeless; yet a vast deal of burning, devastation, plundering, and other horrors would be previously perpetrated, of which the English people (fortunately for them) know nothing, except from hearsay; but which we, my friends, have too often witnessed ever to forget.

"On the number of years or months *one individual* happens to remain on the opposite bank of the Styx mainly depends the continuation of peace between France and England; and they who, like ourselves, witnessed the constant anxiety and alarm exhibited by tens of thousands of our countrymen

during the period of Napoleon's threatened invasion, ought not to forget the lesson then taught; neither should they lose sight of the probability that our restless neighbours will be far more likely to try their hand at an invading excursion with their *steamers*, than their fathers were before the introduction of that powerful agent."

CHAPTER XIV.

READ THIS CHAPTER, YE WHO SPECULATE IN RAILROAD SHARES.—NOW'S YOUR TIME.

WHILST Vanguard and his friends were loitering at the ferry, Charon arrived with a large cargo; and amongst the passengers they discovered an old friend and brother soldier, who, in consequence of his having been a very active officer at the outposts during the war in the Peninsula, they accosted as the *Old Cossack;* and having welcomed him amongst them, they requested he would give them his own history since they parted, and the latest news also from the opposite bank.

"All my attempts to enter the matrimonial state having proved unsuccessful," said the Old Cossack, "and feeling no inclination to deposit myself in a cottage, all alone in my glory, I passed my time, after I had sheathed my sword and put on a plain coat, much in the same manner as so many old bachelors of the United Services spend theirs, viz.,

lounging about the club houses, making annual excursions up the Rhine, fishing and shooting in the Highlands, visiting friends in different parts of the kingdom, and so forth. This routine continued; and I was as well satisfied with it as mortals usually are with the lot that is cast for them.

"As to the latest news from the other side the Styx, you are all aware, perhaps, that the tax on incomes is to be continued for three more years, and that it will most probably be *renewed* again and again; and, moreover, that they who brave cholera in the East Indies, and yellow fever and land crabs in the West, are not exempt from it. This, by the bye, is but child's play when compared with the *ten per cent.* paid in the war even by the *ensign* on his income, which, *including* his bât and forage money when in the field, amounted to a fraction more than *one hundred pounds a year.* Yet, as he had the honour and glory of being constantly shot at, marched, countermarched, and half starved, winter and summer, from year's end to year's end, it was but fair and reasonable that he should pay handsomely for enjoying those privileges. By way of a set off, however, against the income tax, an immense boon has been conferred on your friends on the other side this river, who will, ere long, be able to purchase sugar for their tea and coffee at nearly three farthings a pound cheaper than before; and as they will enjoy also the inestimable blessing of being able to buy glass, staves, birdseed,

and other articles cheaper, you will readily believe that singing-bird fanciers are intoxicated with delight, that hothouses and greenhouses are springing up like mushrooms in all directions, and that idle boys do nothing now-a-days but belabour each other about the head and shoulders with staves, in lieu of the hazel sticks heretofore used for the game of attack and defence, commonly called single-stick. You may recollect, my friends, that I always had a fondness for sweet things, amongst which may be enumerated sweet punch; and as I have no wish to dwell long on an unpleasant subject, I shall cut my own history short, by saying that the reduced price of sugar induced me to indulge, with some old campaigners, in rather too liberal an allowance of very sweet, hot, strong whiskey toddy, for several successive nights, which—having long had a predisposition to determination of blood to the head—brought on apoplexy, whilst I was laying down the law on outpost troops and outpost duties; and, before I knew what had happened, I was most unceremoniously handed over to old Charon. Thus much for myself; and I will now proceed to relate other matters which will afford you more interest.

"One subject alone engrosses almost entirely the public mind at present, and that is railroads. Go where you will, you hear nothing discussed but the prices of shares, and the premium or discount they are at; and John Bull is investing his spare cash

either in the countless number of railroads which are made, making, or projected, over all parts of the United Kingdom, or in the French, Belgian, or other Continental ones. But the road of all roads is that which I saw a prospectus of just before I crossed the Styx. It is to be on the atmospheric-pressure principle, and is called the Grand Hispano-Lusitanian, Gallic, Bavarian, Saxonian, Prussian, Bohemian, Austro-Hungarian, Polish, and Russian Railroad. The line is to be carried from Cadiz to Petersburg; there are to be branches into different parts of Portugal and several of the Spanish provinces; the Morena, Guadarama, Pyrenean, and other mountains are to be tunnelled, and France will be entered near Bagnares.

"In continuing the line from the foot of the Pyrenees to Petersburg, there will be branches to Holland, Hanover, Switzerland, Piedmont, Savoy, Hungary, Austria, Bohemia, Moscow, and various other places; and on its being completed to Petersburg, it is in contemplation to carry it on to Lapland. The Andalusians and Castilians are already on the tiptoe of expectation, and anticipating with great delight an occasional trip to Lapland, there to luxuriate on ice in every possible way, to allay the effects of the overpowering heat of their native clime, and to give the fair Lapland nymphs some idea of tertulias, boleros, cachuchas, fandangos, and castanets. The Great Western will be thrown quite into the shade, and unable

to hold a candle to this Grand General European Railroad, in which our countrymen have already invested money to a vast amount, and the shares of which were at a premium before I embarked in Charon's ferry-boat.

"Two other questions of greater importance to England are occasionally mentioned: Harbours of Refuge and the neglected state of the Militia; to the former of which the Government appears at last to have turned some portion of its attention; but to the latter *none*. In discussing this subject not long since with some officers of Militia, one of them very justly remarked that it was a sad pity and very false economy to have neglected the ballot, and thus allowed so fine a force as the Militia of the United Kingdom to dwindle down to *one serjeant per company*. All the money laid out either in ballot, pay, clothing, or arms, would be spent in the country, and cause a circulation which would in due course return in the shape of increased revenue; the Militia being called together for training would employ many, many men now breaking stones on the roads, thereby easing the poor-rates. Countrymen once drilled, trained, and dressed as Militiamen, would be willing to volunteer for the Line with a small bounty, and much of the difficulty in now recruiting for the Line would be overcome. The ballot having been so long neglected, the rising generation do not know even that they are *liable* to serve; and should this neglect continue much

longer, great and serious difficulties, nay, even disturbances, may occur at some future time of great emergency, when the Militia may be wanted at a short notice; and then, even if raised, the *officers* will have to learn their duty in a hurry. The staff serjeants are growing old and inefficient; and in the event of war not a man could be spared from the Line to instruct either officers or men.

"Such may, and very likely will, be the case, from the penny-wise-and-pound-foolish system now carried on. Besides which, many old subalterns who remain in the Militia Regiments for the sake of 2*s.* 6*d.* per diem half-pay, ought to be allowed to *retire, retaining* the 2*s.* 6*d.*, which would make room for efficient young men. Should the Government think a ballot and training too expensive, they might ballot for *half* or a *third-part* of the force every three years, and train and *embody* a few regiments at a time, and for one year each; so as to wear out a suit of clothing, without going to the expense of raising the whole force all at once. I believe much money is wasted and misapplied on the ballot; country clerks, &c., cause great expense, all of which might be improved. The ballot should be carried on by the overseers of the poor; the adjutant, with a staff serjeant for clerk, might be useful with the ballot, and save much expense of attornies and sub-division clerks. Those were his remarks and suggestions: and they appear to me to be full of sound reasoning."

"I think," said Evergreen, "his plan an excellent one for *always* having a few regiments of Militia embodied, and for keeping them so for one year, instead of calling out the whole of the Militia force at once for twenty-eight days' training. Those who were drawn by ballot in 1831 were only bound, I believe, to serve for five years; at the expiration of which they were discharged, and the expense of training, as well as the time expended, went for nothing, and was labour lost. I think the period too short; and, had I a voice in the question, it should be extended to seven years. Not long before your arrival amongst us, my old Cossack (continued Evergreen), our friend Vanguard made a proposal touching the Militia, which was to do away entirely, or nearly so, with all the Yeomanry Cavalry of England, Wales, and Scotland, and to establish *permanent Militia Depôts* in their place. According to his calculation, upwards of five thousand privates of Militia might be paid *all the year round*, at the rate of one shilling and a penny per day, with the money voted annually for the Yeomanry; by which means we should at *all times* have a Depôt consisting of forty or fifty well-trained privates of each regiment in addition to the serjeants now on the rolls and receiving pay. Every Militia corps would then have a capital, well-organized nucleus, on which the raw materials could be speedily put into a formidable and efficient state, but which

could not possibly be the case as things are *now* managed. Vanguard proved clearly enough that these permanent Depôts would be highly serviceable in a variety of ways beside.

"The rising generation who were not born in those momentous times when England was beset with enemies and fighting for her existence as a nation, cannot enter warmly into the feelings which actuate their predecessors; but is it possible that men in power can have forgotten what the country owed to her splendid Militia force in that great struggle; that thousands and thousands of the finest soldiers the world ever saw, or ever will see, volunteered from its ranks into the Line, highly trained and organized, and that without such a *corps de reserve* it would have been utterly impossible to fill up the losses daily occasioned by the sword, the pestilential diseases of the tropics, and other causes? The Englishman who blinds his eyes to those facts, who is callous and indifferent about the important subject, and does not know the value of this great and formidable force (great and formidable if properly managed—*not* as it *now* is constituted) may learn a useful lesson by looking across the Channel, and seeing how our neighbours arrange such matters. The National Guard, or, in other words, the *Militia* of France, of which every town of importance has a portion, consists of *one million two hundred thousand,* and some hundred

men; *three hundred thousand* of whom are organized so as to be fit to put in motion and to serve in *one month;* whilst that of Great Britain and Ireland is cut down to a few dozen superannuated serjeants!!!

"Let us hope soon to hear better things from the other side the Styx."

CHAPTER XV.

CONTAINS SOME TRUTHS WELL WORTH THE ATTENTION OF THE "POWERS THAT BE."

"A FEW days before I crossed the Styx," continued the Old Cossack, "the Army Estimates were brought before the House, and some curious arguments were adduced in the debates thereon. Members of Parliament, like many other people, are often apt to run into extremes; and on the occasion in question it was pretty much the case. Some were for doing away almost entirely with the Household Troops, and replacing them by those of the Line; whilst others were horror-struck at the bare idea of reducing a single man of them, and entrusting the safety of the Sovereign to *Linesmen*, who, although they have so often proved themselves capable of thrashing her Majesty's enemies in every part of the globe, are not, it must be presumed, supposed to be sufficiently trustworthy of participating occasionally in the far more arduous and important duties of Windsor and the metropolis. It is the

opinion, perhaps, of those most loyal Senators, that the monarchy would crumble away and disappear entirely if such measures were adopted."

"The truth lies between them," observed Evergreen; "and it is easy to explain how. Very few of her Majesty's subjects would desire to see her without a proper and sufficiently numerous force of Guards, both Horse and Foot; but there are very many who think, and think rightly too, that the proportion of Guards to the Line is a most unfair one, view it in any way you will.

"At the termination of the war, great reductions were made in the Navy, Marines, Artillery, the Line, and other branches of the Service; but how fared it with the Household Troops?—was the pruning knife applied to them in an equal ratio? Very far from it. The numerical strength of each battalion of Foot Guards has been, I believe, diminished since the great general reduction of the sea and land forces; but *seven battalions* they still have, and this is the same number they had in the war. The Brigade of Household Cavalry also remains pretty much in *statu quo*, with the exception of a diminution in the strength of each troop. They have, at all events, two more troops in each of those three regiments than any other corps of Cavalry, except the 1st Dragoon Guards. As, however, the colonial and other duties performed by the British Cavalry are a mere bagatelle when compared with those which de-

volve on the Infantry of the Line, there can be but little objection to those three regiments being kept up.

"One of two steps ought to have been taken; and no one who is not blinded and borne away by an idolatrous love and affection for everything appertaining to the Household Troops, to the prejudice of the *workmen* of the army—the Line—will deny the justice of it.

"*Three* battalions of Guards ought to have been *reduced*, and three regiments of the Line retained instead; *or*, as the whole of the *seven battalions* were kept up, *three* of them should have taken their full proportion of the colonial duties, and the other four been kept always near the person of the Sovereign during peace.

"It must be obvious enough, nevertheless, to all who consider the thing attentively and with strict impartiality, that the person of the Sovereign *could* be guarded, and the duties of the metropolis and Windsor be equally well performed, by the *Line*; and, in spite of what may be said to the contrary, at much less expense.

"I would ask those whose excessive adoration and admiration of everything aristocratic may lead them to doubt the truth of this, if the Austrian Government is not *absolute* enough, *despotic* enough, and *high and mighty* enough, to satisfy the most decided out-and-outers of the British aristocracy? Yet, with the exception of one or two hundred men of rank,

who are always about the palace, there are *no Guards* in the Austrian army; and the Sovereign is, consequently, consigned to the care of what we call troops of the Line, and very well he appears to have been taken care of hitherto.

"The King of the French, entrusting himself and his family to the care of troops of the Line, and without having any *Guards*, has managed to rub on thus far, and to hold his ground on the opposite bank of the Styx, notwithstanding the diabolical machinations against his life. These facts are well worth the serious attention of men who, when it is intimated to them that the Line are quite capable of doing the duties in and about London, *object* to it on the score of their not being such *fine, tall, well set up, imposing-looking men* as the Guards; that foreign potentates and princes would not be so much electrified as they now are on visiting the metropolis; that their opinions of British Infantry would undergo a change for the worse, and other twaddle of the same kind. Foreign big-wigs, who have ever taken a book in hand in which the history of the British Army has been faithfully given, must soon be undeceived, and find that the British Infantry of the Line are inferior to none on the face of the globe. When the Household Brigade of Cavalry went to the Peninsula in the end of 1812, or the early part 1813, and to Flanders in 1815, did the Cavalry which performed the London duties in their absence perform it imperfectly?

"It was stated, when the Army Estimates were laid before the House, that the saving to the country would be but trifling if the Guards were discontinued and the Line substituted for them. Now, although it is as clear as the sun at noon-day, that the Guards are infinitely more costly than an equal number of the Line would be, I for one should nevertheless wish always to see a *fair proportion* of Guards near the Sovereign, for *stage effect* (and, truly, it *is* but stage effect after all).

"But let us put pounds, shillings, and pence out of the question, and look at it in another point of view; one, by the bye, which the special pleaders for the Householders always carefully avoid doing, but which the members of the one hundred and twelve battalions of the Line (nearly *eighty* of which are *always* in the colonies) are not likely to lose sight of.

"Had the plan I propose been carried into effect immediately after the Waterloo campaign, the overworked Linesmen would have had three more battalions than they have had for thirty years past, to aid and assist them in the colonial duties; and regiments which have been grilled and shot at like targets in India for upwards of twenty years, would have a much better chance than they *now* have of being relieved at the expiration of that time."

"True, most true," exclaimed Havresack, who had for some time evinced symptoms of irritation and impatience; "but we all know full well that not one

member in forty, of either the Upper or Lower House, thinks, knows, or cares one straw about the matter; and if the question happens to be mooted in Parliament, up jump men by the dozen to espouse the cause of the Householders, and to consign, with the utmost indifference, to their usual quantum of cholera, yellow fever, land crabs, and other tropical blessings, the *mere Linesmen.*

"We have seen this question agitated when Whigs were in power and when Tories also held the reins, and it has met the same fate at the hands of both; for both parties work with the same tools when in office, and both hold equally sacred this golden egg, which appears to have been laid expressly for the benefit of the great. If I were now a sojourner on the opposite bank of the Styx, I should have no hesitation in offering a bet that were it proposed in the *Upper House* that the seven battalions of Guards should be increased to *fourteen,* and always kept in or near London, and that seven regiments of the Line should be reduced in their place, the motion would be carried by a great majority."

"You'd win your bet," said Bugle, "as sure as my name is Harry."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT SHOULD READ THIS CHAPTER, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY FIND IN IT SOME UNPALATABLE "TRUTHS."—A FEW LINES RELATIVE TO SIBORNE'S MODELS OF WATERLOO; HINTS TO INVALIDS AND COUNTRY PRACTITIONERS; A DISSERTATION ON POETRY, POLKA DANCERS, THE POST HORN GALOP, &c. &c. &c.

"'T is some time since any of our old campaigning friends arrived from the opposite bank," observed Colonel Evergreen to Havresack, Bugle, O'Houghlahan, and others who had congregated at the ferry; "but I am greatly deceived if, amongst the passengers now drawing near the bank with Charon, I don't twig our much-valued comrade, Jim Green, formerly of the old *Die Hards!*"

"Right, right," exclaimed O'Houghlahan; "I 'd swear to him; sure I can't be mistaken after having

once got a sight of that nose of his, to assist in the painting of which I was always ready and willing, either with La Fitte and Hermitage, sherry and port, or humble black strap and rum grog."

Having interrogated him as to the cause of his having crossed the Styx, they desired he would give them the most recent news from the opposite side, on which he thus began:—

"There are various ways of sending a person post-haste across this river, and the cause of my thus suddenly appearing amongst you was so singular, that you must excuse me if I enter pretty much into detail, and explain all that happened before old Charon got me into his clutches. You know, I presume, that, little more than a year since, an honourable and gallant member of Parliament made a motion in the Lower House that all who had belonged to the Peninsular Army, and who were *undecorated for their services in those fields,* should have a medal. The Waterloo, Chinese, Affghanistan, and certain parts of the Indian Armies had received decorations for services which, if all put together, were not, in the opinion of very many men, to be named in the same day with those performed six years successively in the Peninsula and the south of France, winter and summer, against the best troops and the most talented and experienced Generals in Europe (*alias* in the world); and the honourable mover therefore *hoped for,* and perhaps *expected,* success.

"The opinion of those best informed on the subject was that the *then* Secretary at War was also hearty in the cause, and anxious that common justice should be done to his long-neglected fellow soldiers, even at the eleventh hour: a feeling most natural and laudable.

"But, will it be credited that he could so far forget himself, and so soon *entirely* change his opinion, (opinion ?) as to go down to the House of Commons—*directed* to do so, it has been rumoured and generally believed—and, instead of supporting the motion with all his power, endeavour to persuade those who had patience to listen to him, that the armies of Waterloo, China, Affghanistan, and parts of that of India, *had* performed *peculiar* and *important* services to their country, and were therefore entitled to decorations; but that the Peninsular Army—to which, by the bye, he is *entirely* indebted for all his honours, emoluments, and his present high station—had no such claims ? Will posterity believe that such an assertion could by possibility have escaped from the lips of any man of the most common understanding, or that his fellow soldiers would have been further insulted by being told that 'the Peninsular Army never *attacked* a position which it did not *carry*, nor ever *defended* one which it did not *keep*;' and that THEREFORE they were not entitled to a decoration ?

"Well, my friends," continued the old *Die Hard*, "that motion was *burked* and most unceremoniously

kicked out of the Commons; and it is worthy of remark that, with a few honourable exceptions, men of all political parties cut and ran from the House the moment the motion was broached—and in so doing the Premier set them the example—thus evincing a scandalous apathy, utter indifference, and a total want of proper feeling, most discreditable to them all, and most disgusting to those who, for years and years, had fought the battles of their country whilst those gentry and their fathers were sleeping soundly on beds of down.

"The *Die Hards* were not so fortunate as to arrive in time for Waterloo; and, on joining that Army in France, we could not help looking back on the many bloodstained fields of the Peninsula in which we had taken so prominent a part,—Albuera especially, where the *Die Hards* were nearly annihilated, and of whom it was reported by the General who commanded there, 'that they lay in ranks as they fell; every man wounded in front.' Yet had we the sad mortification of knowing that *we* were to remain *badgeless*, whilst we every instant ran against youngsters wearing a medal for Waterloo, who never until that day *saw* an enemy, and many of whom were in leading strings when we were starving, bivouacking, marching by night and day in all weathers and in all seasons, and fighting and defeating the Imperial Legions of France.

"And, to fill up the measure of our disgust and

indignation, we were *again* told, not long before I crossed the Styx (when a noble and gallant Peninsular soldier, the Duke of Richmond, presented a similar petition to the House of Lords), that the Armies of Waterloo, China, India, and Affghanistan richly deserved decorations, but that the Peninsular Army had received the thanks of Parliament on *sixteen different occasions*, and that *that* was sufficient. They were thanked by Parliament for defeating in sixteen battles the best troops in the world; to which might have been added, that they gained for their great leader, in six years, the titles of Baron, Viscount, Earl, Marquis, and Duke, with a Field-Marshal's baton and various large pecuniary grants. *These*, it appears, are considered cogent reasons for their *not* receiving a decoration!"

"Who seconded the Duke of Richmond when he presented the petition to the Lords?" inquired Havresack. "No one," replied the *Die Hard*; "and I blushed as much for the Peers as I did last year for the members of the Lower House on a similar occasion.

"Our great opponent, however, instantly found a seconder; although, it must be confessed, a most feeble and unnatural one. The noble, gallant, and kind-hearted Richmond gave this Peer his *quietus*; and, as descanting on his conduct on that day would be a useless waste of time, 'we will not'—to use the expression of a writer

on the other side the Styx—'stop to break a butterfly on the wheel.'*

"My temperament was always an exceedingly excitable one—and as my constitution had been shattered by hard service and bad climates, I was so deucedly upset by the fate of the late petition as to become seriously ill. My wife, without my knowledge, sent for the parish doctor (we resided in an obscure district); and up he walked to my bed room. Having felt my pulse, &c., &c., he pronounced my malady a most violent derangement of the spleen, liver, and biliary organs. In vain did I assure him that my sufferings were *mental*, not *bodily;* and I endeavoured to explain to him that bitter disappointment, coupled with indignation and disgust, occasioned all my sufferings, which I believed time and reflection would subdue. This Esculapius, in order to save trouble, was in the habit of riding about the country with one waistcoat pocket filled with *calomel* and the other with pulverized *barytes*. He was by no means nice, nor did he consider twenty or thirty grains, more or less, of the least importance; and as he had at last talked me into consent, I swallowed a dose of those two atrocious poisons without his having weighed or measured the quantity. I *now* am convinced that I

* It is almost unnecessary to remark, that this was written long before her Majesty was graciously pleased to grant a decoration to the veterans of the war.

took at least a drachm of each (enough to destroy an elephant), and soon after he had taken his departure from my domicile, I found my knees drawn up to my chin with excruciating agony ; and having suffered indescribable pain for some hours, I was summoned to old Charon's ferry-boat, and here I am—a melancholy instance (although not an unusual one) of the sad effects of placing oneself in the hands of ignorant practitioners.

"And now, my old comrades, as you know the fate of the motions in both Houses of Parliament, I will give you another piece of information, which is, that the Peninsular soldiers, although infinitely disgusted and somewhat disheartened by the unmerited treatment they have received at the hands of those who, above all others, ought to have strenuously supported, instead of throwing icy-cold water on their just claims, have determined to make one more effort, and to petition the Queen for that which has been so unceremoniously and so unnaturally refused to them in the Senate Houses ; and the noble and gallant Richmond has again kindly consented to lay the petition at the foot of the throne.

"In this petition they are joined by those officers of the navy, marines, and army, *who were engaged with the enemy in the last* (i. e., the *revolutionary*) war, which terminated in 1815, after the battle of Waterloo.

"I do not imagine there will be any claims given in for services performed *after* 1815 ; but I cannot speak with certainty on that point.

"It is much to be regretted that many Peninsular officers are deterred from signing the petition from an apprehension that by so doing they will be visited with the wrath and displeasure of those in power, and that their hopes of promotion will be blasted. I cannot think so meanly of men at the head of affairs, nor can I believe that they would persecute those under their command for temperately petitioning for that to which they have indisputable claims, and which ought to have been given them at the termination of the Peninsular war in 1814.

"Others of that army, who happened to be at Waterloo also (and there are many such), and received a medal for that battle, are scrupulous about signing the petition, assigning as a reason that they *are not undecorated.* But they appear to forget entirely that *all hands* of the Waterloo Army, combatants and non-combatants, surgeons, paymasters, quartermasters, and veterinary surgeons, received medals, and that it would be the very height of injustice and cruelty to turn round on those who toiled and fought through the Peninsular campaigns, *without having received any badge for their services in those glorious fields,* and to say to them, 'You, gentlemen, *are not undecorated;* you have a *Waterloo medal,* which must suffice for your services in the Peninsula and elsewhere also.' The natural reply would be—'A similar decoration is suspended at the breasts of great numbers of the Waterloo Army who never saw Spain, except in the

map of Europe, and, until the 18th of June, 1815, never saw an enemy; consequently, *we* should have had Waterloo medals, if we also had never seen a trigger pulled in Spain.'

"Were I still a sojourner on the other side the Styx, my feeling would be this—I should appreciate the Waterloo badge exceedingly; but if told that I must not expect a medal commemorative of my Peninsular services, *because* I already possessed one for Waterloo, my reply would be—'Take back the Waterloo badge, and give me one for the Peninsula, since I must not have both.'

"And this reminds me that, not long before I left the opposite bank, a gallant officer, at a great expense of time and money, constructed two beautiful models on an extensive scale, representing the battle of Waterloo at two distinct and most critical periods of that bloody day.

"We have all seen panoramas of various battles, and, with but few exceptions, they may answer equally well as representations of one fight as of another; Wagram or Waterloo,—Salamanca or Austerlitz,—Jena or Talavera. Lines and squares of Infantry blazing away in every direction; *here* into the ranks of friends, *there* into those of their enemies; Highlanders placed in the foreground, and playing first fiddle in battles wherein not a Highland Regiment happened to be present; Cavalry charging to the right, left, and front simultaneously, without any

apparent motive, and the Artillery discharging salvos of round and grape shot *ad libitum;* oftentimes in any and every direction but the right one.

"In the Waterloo models, on the contrary, not only are the different regiments, brigades, and divisions of the contending armies placed with great accuracy on the ground where they were actually engaged, but every undulation of ground is laid down with great correctness, and every tree, hedge, building, road, path, &c., &c., likewise.

"Those very clever and ingeniously-contrived productions ought long ago to have been purchased by the British Government and made national property; but the opinion of men in power appears to be that *four thousand pounds* (which the gallant officer is out of pocket by constructing them) is so very great a sum that it would inevitably make us a nation of bankrupts if we expended it in that manner. Meanwhile, there are many who have subscribed towards purchasing them with a view of presenting them to the British nation; and if, amongst the great mass of civilians and military men, a few hundreds could be induced to come forward and contribute their mite, their *little* mite, the constructor of the models would be rescued from a heavy pecuniary loss, and the British public be in possession of a most valuable and faithful representation of that great and decisive battle.

"There goes the late Pope, or I 'm much mistaken," continued Jim Green; "'tis deuced like him,

at all events; and I know that we crossed the ferry in the same boat. The Cardinal who succeeded him, and now fills the Papal chair, intends to establish a first-rate pack of fox hounds (he 's an extremely bold rider across a country); and 'tis whispered, moreover, that he 's an out-and-outer at the Polka and the Post Horn Galop."

"Polka and Post Horn Galop; pray what may they be," inquired the Blenheim hero?

"It 's not very easy to describe them," said Jim Green; "but if you can picture to yourself eighty or a hundred couple of young people (not *always* very juvenile, by the bye) going round and round a ball room—half waltz, half anything else you please—bump, bump, bump, without taking much trouble to keep time or to perform any particular figure, you may conceive pretty nearly what those capering, curvetting and graceless dances really are. And as for the Galop, it 's the devil take the hindmost; the object of each couple being, apparently, to get round the room with the least possible delay and in as harum-scarum a manner as possible."

"This is a falling off, indeed, from the dances of *my* day," observed the Blenheim hero; "the Minuet, the Minuet, gentlemen, *was* worthy of admiration; but modern mummeries have, I dare say, thrown that slow, solemn, hearse-like, graceful dance quite into the shade."

"You must recollect an officer—a thin, slight man

—who belonged to your division of the Peninsular Army, and who, if report says truly, was one of your principal abettors in all sorts of devilry and mischief," said the *Die Hard* to Evergreen.

"Yes, yes," replied the Colonel, "I know who you mean; and a pretty nut he was, too, for the devil to crack. Amongst his other pursuits, he was a bit of a poet. Don't you remember some verses he wrote when we were nearly in a state of starvation at the Village of Ramon Gordo, close to the Bridge of Almaraz, keeping soul and body together for more than a fortnight on an extremely small allowance (some days on *none*) of tough goat's flesh, and cakes baked on the lids of the camp kettles, made of chopped straw and bran, without a morsel of salt or vegetables, and with no fluid stronger than Tagus water? Those were not times for cracking jokes; for famine was on *our* side the Tagus and the French pickets immediately opposite; yet my friend and coadjutor in pig-firing &c., &c., was not to be deterred from poetizing; and I recollect a few of the lines ran thus:—

"O Ramon Gordo, hottest place in Spain
Where bran and goat's flesh 's all we can o' tain,
Where salt, nor bread, nor gen'rous wine appear;
Our bev'rage water, from that rill so near;
Village of dirt, and bug, and lively flea,
And other insects which shall nameless be;
Village from which thy dark-ey'd maids have flown
And left us soldiers in it all alone."

"I quite forget the remaining stanzas; but at the time they were considered particularly touching and

expressive. He subsequently composed verses on seeing some wasps buzzing about and alighting on a lady's ringlets, neck and lips!

"I've a great notion," said Jim Green, "that we shall soon have him on this side the Styx; for he had a severe illness not long before I came across, and his recovery was much impeded by a deep wound inflicted in his heart by a fair lady who, in consequence of his being much emaciated by his recent malady, designates him the thin old gentleman.

"We shall soon have him here, depend upon it, and he 'll bring a large budget of news with him to a certainty, which will be speedily promulgated, unless he 's much changed since we parted company on the other side the Styx."

THE END.

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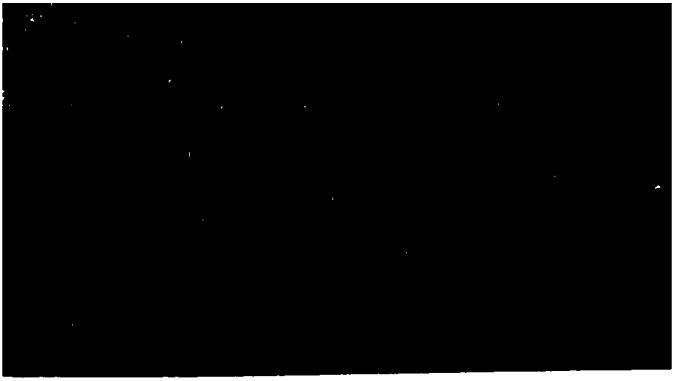

ERRATA.

In page 40, line 7, for "whom," read "who"
,, 104, *note*, line 2, for "sewers," read "towers"

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